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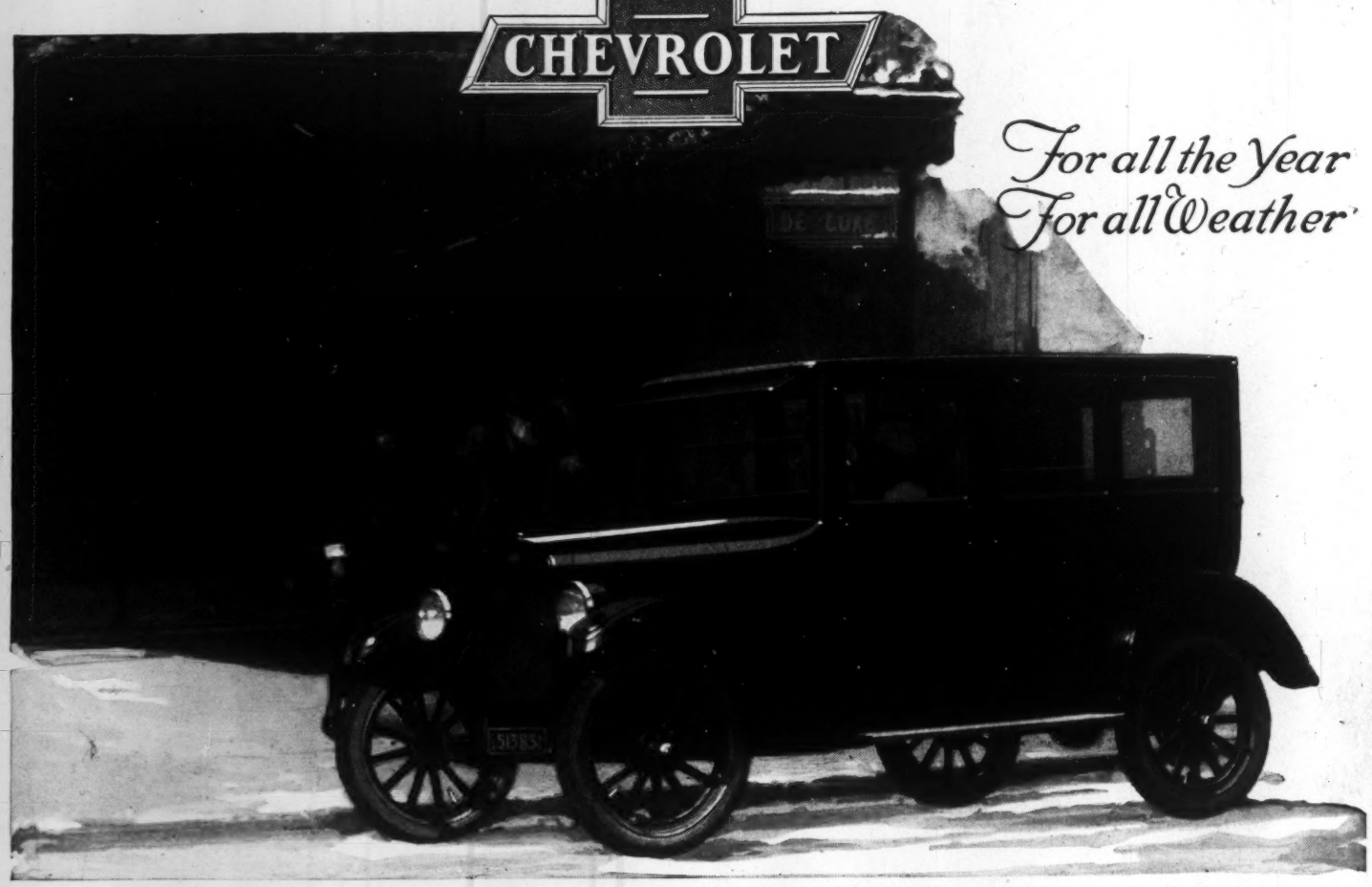

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Volume 56 Number 3

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

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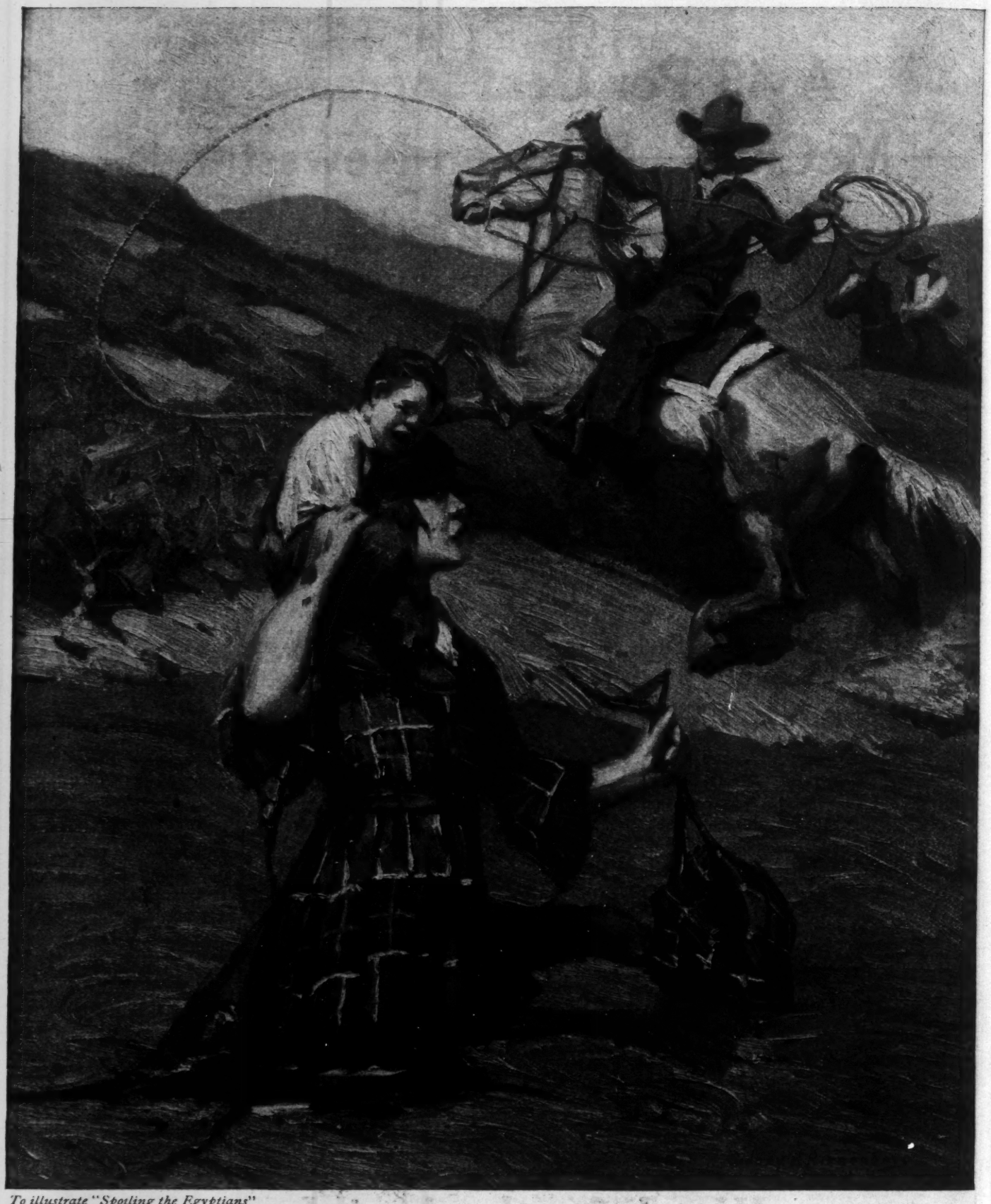

To illustrate "Spoiling the Egyptians"

Pinky jerked the gray mare to her haunches at the edge of the bog and his rope shot out to a woman, standing hip deep in mud and holding a small boy on her shoulder. "Put the kid in first," called Pinky

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McCLURE'S MAGAZINE
S. S. McCLURE, *Editor*
KENNETH W. PAYNE, *Managing Editor*

MARCH
1924

Spoiling the Egyptians

"That Animal's a Hoss—a Little Gray Mare Hoss. And She Can Run!"

By Ledyard M. Bailey

Illustrations by Sidney H. Riesenberg

"FIFTEEN two, fifteen four, fifteen six, fifteen eight, an' a pair's ten—and a double run of three is six, which is sixteen—and out!" chanted Pinky Parker; and poked the little bone peg into the last hole, and gloated. "I thought you claimed to be a crib player!" he jeered.

"Son," said Beak Leary, "I play cribbage as a pastime, but I ain't a slave to it. I don't let it run away with what little character and intellect is left me, after associatin' for years with cows and line riders—and other low forms of animal life."

He stretched his long arms and leaned back against the wall, rolling a cigarette. Pinky Parker remembered his duty as host and stuck some more chopped sage brush into the little stove. His line camp was a snug cabin of adobe and plank, built to withstand blizzards; but the nights were still cold on the high range, even in May, and the fire was comfortable.

"Trouble with you, Pink," Mr. Leary went on, smoke swirling about his arched nose, "is that you plumb lost your sense of proportion. You play at line riding, and you make a business of cribbage. You're getting to be as simple-minded as those English guys down at the Longmoor Club. They have abandoned themselves to a ridin' game they call polo until they have mighty nigh lost all human instincts."

"I hate to see you misuse a pleasant pastime the way you do," said Beak Leary

Pinky Parker grinned widely. It was not every day one got the better of this Beak Leary, crack rider for the Split X, and due to be foreman in another year—not in any game whatever. So he grinned with triumph at hearing him roar thus.

By contrast with the lithe length of Beak's six feet and the bold strength of his nose and jaw, Pinky looked slight and boyish, with a round face under his red hair, and a wide mouth that stretched until his ears were in danger when he grinned as he was doing now. But his slender body was compact and well-knit, and his hazel eyes were set among fine wrinkles that betokened experience, as well as much sun and wind.

Pinky had seen life at high speed and high temperature, and had

ridden race horses long before he topped a range pony. Just why he had left the race tracks for the sage brush was his own business, and the West had never asked him about it. He knew horses, he did his work, he could take care of himself in a crowd or elsewhere; and he had a quick eye and a quick wit.

"I judge you don't crave to try to get revenge?" he said, prolonging his triumph.

"Not this night!" retorted Beak. "Like I tell you—I hate to see you misuse a pleasant pastime the way you do."

Pinky called in his grin and rolled himself two or three cigarettes with deft fingers.

"This polo you tell about," he resumed, "I've seen one or two games of it myself, and it looked like a real lively scrimmage. Some good little horses they had, and the men knew how to ride."

"I EXPECT they do," said Beak. "I was only pointing out to you the way a good game can be degraded into a low and demoralizin' occupation. But they did have eyes for a horse," he admitted. "That's how come I had the misfortune to meet the members of that club. The Judge sent me down there last summer with a band of lightweight stuff we combed off the horse range—mustang stock, hardly heavy enough for our work. Those English guys ran them over and bought all the good ones—and paid real money for them. All the same," he added vindictively, "they ain't human!"

Pinky Parker had heard something of this experience. It appeared that these English guys had tried their superior manner with Mr. Leary. It had been a mistake—an expensive mistake as things turned out. As Pinky expressed it—to himself—the outfit that tried to put anything over on Beak Leary was simply laying themselves open for a run of hard luck.

There was silence in the cabin for a few minutes. Outside a coyote sang and mourned, his shrill voice coming faintly down the wind. He sounded like a quartet at least, as he shifted from falsetto runs to gruff recitative.

"Speaking of cows and coyotes and things," remarked Beak Leary, "reminds me, naturally, of coal. How much money you got, Pinky?"

"Not a copper cent," declared Pinky, with finality. And added immediately, "How much you want?"

Beak smiled upon him fondly.

"Good boy!" he said. "Play 'em close to your vest, don't you? Listen now," he went on. "You know those coal claims we located a while back—you and me and Mulligan, and the Judge?" Pinky nodded. "Well, it would be right nice if we could make the final payment on them this summer, and apply for patent. That would make everything snug, and we wouldn't have to worry about some of these railroad bandits jumpin' 'em on us. Five hundred dollars on each claim. And the Judge says he will put up half if we will put up the other half—which is fair enough, seeing there's three of us and only one of him."

"Uh—huh," said Pinky, without enthusiasm. "And us drawin' the munificent pay of forty a month. Why'n't he say five thousand? Not but what the Judge means to be white," he added loyally.

"The Judge" was lord of the Split X domain. He was long-headed, and had earned his title outside of any court of law. Looking ahead, he forecast shrewdly the effect of opening up the range to settlement, and he reasoned that, since the cows were to be pushed out, it was only fair that the cowmen, having been here first, should take their pick of what would be left. Hence, among other things, the coal claims: and as a matter of course he located his men in on an even footing with himself. The Judge believed in his men, and they would fight for him any time. Which was no reason at all for not kicking when they felt like it.

"Why couldn't we go up and do the assessment work on 'em, the three of us, and hold them that way?" demanded Pinky.

"We could—if everybody in this country was a white man, like us," Beak explained patiently. "But you remember what happened to those boys down Almy way. The patent is the only safe proposition."

Pinky Parker swore softly and at length, with a masterly mingling of race-track and range swear words. "Shoot 'em full of holes as a porous plaster!" he finished.

"Yes," agreed Beak, "that would be right pleasant, and nothing but proper. But it wouldn't get us far with the Land Office."

They fell silent again, considering ways and means. Beak Leary rubbed his nose with a deliberate thumb and finger. Pinky rolled another cigarette, put more wood in the stove and left the door open, staring into the blaze. Outside the coyote sang and laughed, and a keen wind shook the window, querulously.

"What's Mulligan say?" asked Pinky suddenly.

"Mulligan says 'God forgive an Irishman for imitatin' the Jews—but 'tis a case for spoiling the Egyptians.' "

Pinky stared at him. "Now what in the name of——" he hesitated for the word, and finished flatly: "What's he mean by that?" He was suspicious, with good reason, of the Irish subtlety of Jimmy Mulligan's humor.

"So I asked him," said Beak, "and all I got was, 'And you a Protestant, and supposed to know what's in your Bible! Black shame to ye!' "

"To-morrow," growled Pinky, with slow ferocity, "I'll take him apart and see what makes him act so funny!"

Beak Leary did not smile at the idea of Pinky's hundred and twenty pounds wrecking Mulligan's hundred and sixty. He felt himself that the situation called for stern measures. But he said only, "To-morrow is another day," and went to bed.

The worst of the bad weather was over by now, and the line camps could be closed for the summer. So after a brief inspection next morning the friends rode back to the headquarters ranch together. Pinky was riding his little gray mare. His race-track training had been proof against the cowman's prejudice toward the sex—in horses: and he was always ready to back his judgment that the little mare was the best horse in the *remuda*. Most of the men, as a matter of principle, scorned her, and so did their horses. The Fool Hen, like his master, treated her with a sort of friendly contempt.

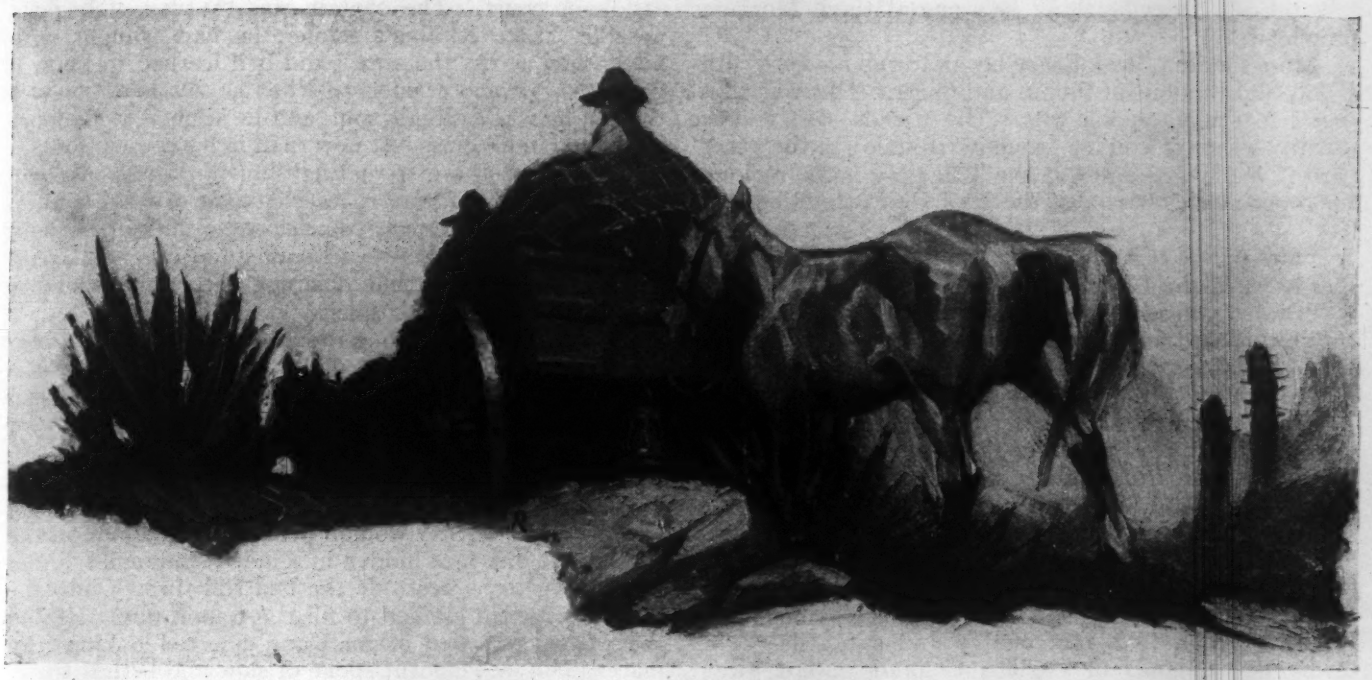
As they dropped down from the last ridge into the wagon road, Beak pulled up sharply.

"What's that!" he exclaimed. They listened: even the horses cocked their ears. In a moment it came again—a woman's shrill scream.

"Yonder!" called Pinky, pointing to where a sunbonnet waved at the end of a calico arm, in the midst of a bright green patch about a quarter of a mile ahead.

BEAK Leary took one look, shouted "Bogged down!" and spurred the Fool Hen to a run.

The Fool Hen could travel, but before he had gone a hundred yards the little gray mare shot past, her ears back, Pinky far forward on her neck, jockey fashion, despite his high saddle horn. Beak swore and threw the irons into the astonished Fool Hen again, but at that Pinky was a good twenty yeards ahead when he jerked the mare to her haunches at the edge of the bog, and his rope shot out to a woman, standing hip deep in the mud and holding a small boy on her shoulder.



A heavy farm wagon, drawn by two rough horses and driven by a tall man, hunched forward, was coming down the road. Behind the wagon was tied a small and dejected-looking gray mare

"Put the kid in first," called Pink. The woman nodded and coolly slipped the noose over the body of the wriggling child. Pink pulled him in hand over hand, swung off and picked him up—muddy and badly scared and screaming bloody murder.

"Your turn now, ma'am," said Beak, and flipped his loop deftly over her head. "Well up under your arms, so it won't cut," he ordered. The woman had nerve. She tied her sunbonnet on again, adjusted the rope under her arms, gripped it tight in both hands, and said, "Now then!" Beak backed the Fool Hen step by step, the woman's face set grimly as the strain came against her body, there was a slow, ugly sucking sound as her legs pulled free of the stubborn mud, and in a moment she was on hard ground again.

As soon as she got her feet she threw off the rope, marched straight to Pinky Parker, grabbed her shrieking offspring and turned him expertly across her knee, drawing his small and muddy overalls tight over the proper part of his anatomy. Her hard brown hand smacked in rapid staccato. The men looked on in mere male amazement. The child's shrieks redoubled, then suddenly ceased altogether.

"I'LL learn you to run away!" said the woman, set the boy on his feet, and holding him firmly by one hand, faced her rescuers.

She was mud to her waist, one stocking had pulled down over her shoe, her hair was everywhere—she was, in a word, much disarranged. But her spirit was undaunted. She smiled broadly, strong white teeth showing in her tanned face.

"Don't you gentlemen think I ain't grateful," she said heartily. "I don't know what I would have done if you hadn't happened along—and been so quick and clever. But this is the aggravatinest child! Seems like I have more trouble teachin' him to mind than all the other four put together!" She gave the boy a little shake, but her expression as she looked down at him was a lovely thing to see, and the child snuggled comfortably against her wet leg.

For once Beak Leary felt that the situation was beyond him.

"You travelin', ma'am?" he inquired at last, feebly.

"Yonder is my wagon," answered the woman, pointing to a canvas top showing above the willows a little way down the draw. "This morning my man took the light rig, and the other children, and went off spyin' out the land." She smiled again. "We aim to homestead round here somewhere. Seems a right nice country."

"It is, ma'am," said Beak gravely.

The woman was suddenly aware of her state.

"Land o' Goshen!" she cried. "Look at the mess I'm in! I better get back to my wagon and see if I can find water enough to clean us up. Oh," she added as an afterthought, "our name is Cranage. If we locate in this neighborhood you boys must come to see us—and stop to dinner. Thank you again, and good-by."

The men swept their broad hats off gallantly as she turned away. "Good-by, ma'am," said Beak: and "Don't mention it, madam," said Pinky, "it has been a pleasure."

After they had ridden round the shoulder of the next rise, he bent in his saddle, shaken with laughter. "Wasn't it funny—her spankin' that kid that way, first rattle out of the box?" he gasped.

Beak assented. "Seems to be the nature of the female parent," he remarked. "I've seen a lady bear training her cubs. She used about the same methods. Only," he added, with a nice regard for accuracy, "she didn't spank 'em on the same place, exactly."

They rode in silence a little way. Then Beak spoke with decision.

"Pinky," he said, "the Judge is right. Cows are good enough now, but they can't last much longer. What chance, I ask you, would a gentle and retiring animal like a range steer have with people like that woman back yonder?"

He paused for a reply. Pinky held his peace.

"And the answer is, my sunny-haired buckaroo, the answer is—coal! They can't scare the coal out of the ground, and they are sure going to need it in the wintertime. We just naturally got to patent those claims, Pinky."

Pinky grunted, still without enthusiasm.

"Wait till I get my hands on that crazy Irishman!" he grumbled. "'Spoiling the Egyptians!' Why'n't he

talk sense? Does he think he's one of these Mormon prophets?"

More silence. Beak Leary began to rub his nose with a slow and thoughtful thumb and finger. This was supposed to stimulate his wits. His friends said it was usually a sign of coming trouble—trouble for the other party. He looked down at the little gray mare, racking smoothly along abreast of the Fool-Hen's shuffling fox-trot.

"Pinky," he observed absently, "the mare is kind of speedy when she's excited."

"Oh, so you noticed that, did you?" drawled Pinky, with biting sarcasm. "Ain't I been telling you for a year she's the fastest thing I ever held between my knees? At the half mile," he added judicially.

That afternoon the three of them held a special session in a quiet spot under the lone cottonwood, and Mulligan—under pressure—expounded his views on a certain passage of Scripture.

THE wide porches of the Longmoor Club faced a stretch of turf whose green perfection spoke of England—England transplanted after the immemorial English fashion to a far country and a hostile. The tawny dry uplands of Eastern Colorado swept away unbroken to a dim horizon on the one hand, and on the other Cheyenne Mountain and The Peak reared out of gray blankets of sage brush. A most improbable setting for a smooth and velvety turf, but there it was. Also, a convincing polo field, a half-mile race track and all the fixings thereunto appertaining. Mining, ranching, railroads, and the tonic air of the high mesas, had lured many of the wandering sons of England into that country; and, living there, they had after their habit builded them a club.

Beyond the stretch of turf ran a ribbon of gray wagon road, climbing out of the dim reaches of the plains, and twisting off into the foothills to the southwest. The tireless wind of the mesas kept it free from dust by the direct method of blowing away every movable particle of dirt.

Captain the Honorable Pennington-Walch, bronzed and womanlike in his polo rig, sat on the porch. His attention was divided between a long and dewy glass of brandy and soda and a half-dozen members of the club, who were paying their distinguished visitor rather assiduous court. The captain was by way of being a notable. Like Kipling's soldier, he had "fought with many men acrost the seas," and had learned to know a good man—friend or enemy—when he saw him. Nevertheless, he was a simple soul, and he seemed to be more interested in his glass just now than in his companions.

Not all of these were Englishmen. Some of them were, if not Americans, at least citizens of these United States, who, never having come closer to the real England than the boat train between London and Liverpool, paid her the poor compliment of aping the manners of her sons, and ignoring their spirit.

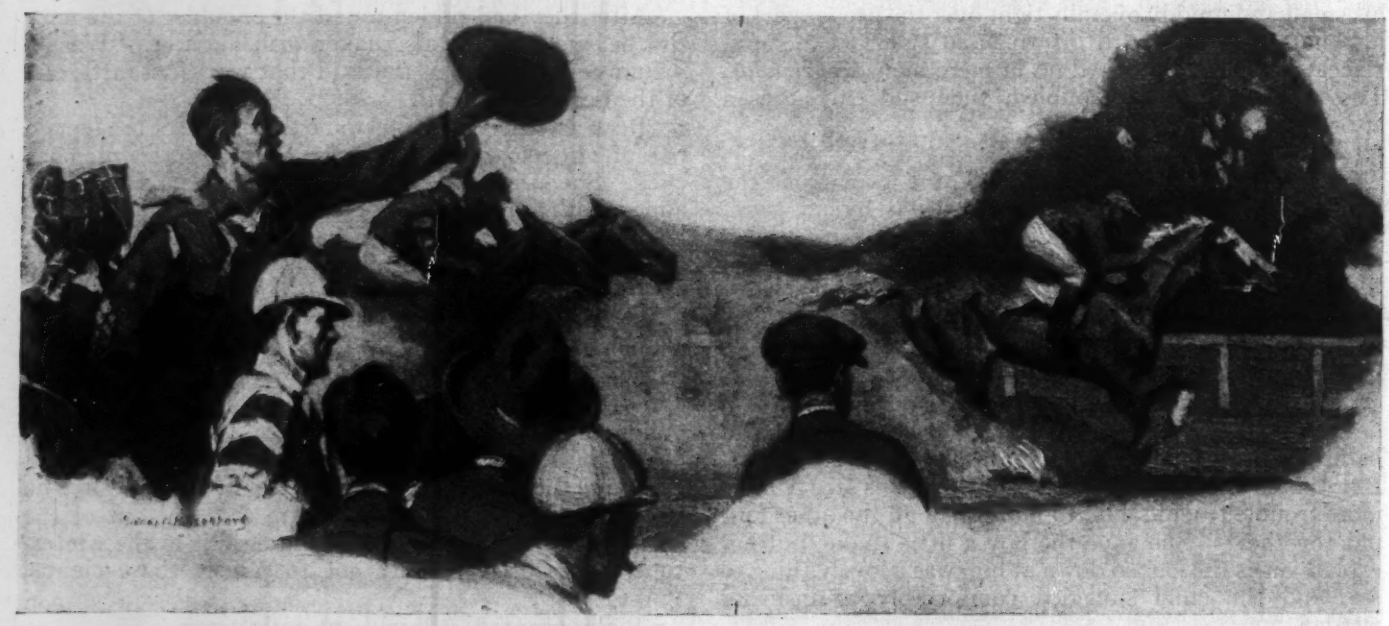
A wagon crawled along the gray ribbon of road from the east. The dust stirred by wheels and hoofs was instantly snatched away by the wind, so that the road seemed to puff smoke as the wagon moved. It came on toward the club, a heavy farm wagon, drawn by two rough horses, and driven by a tall man who sat hunched forward slackly, and now and then slapped the lines along the horses' backs. A woman perched beside him on the spring seat, her face hidden in a faded sunbonnet, and a boy in his 'teens bestrode the bed roll thrown into the loose hay which seemed to fill the wagon box. Behind the wagon was tied a small and dejected-looking gray mare. The whole outfit spoke of slow and listless travel on a long road.

THE group on the club porch paid scant attention to these travelers until the wagon creaked to a stop in front of the grass plot, and the man climbed stiffly down and came slouching up the gravel driveway to the steps.

"Howdy, gents!" he called. "Kin you tell me if I am headed right fer Cripple Creek?" He was a tall man, but he walked sort of hunched over, as if much jolting of wagons had bent his back prematurely. He was roughly dressed in shabby overalls and a hopeless hat, and his weather-bitten face might have been cleaner. To the eyes of some of the idlers on the porch he looked like fair game for a bit of jesting.

"And why Cripple Creek, old chap?" called one. "Are you by way of bein' a mining magnate, then? In disguise?" he added, by way of snapper.

"Well, no—gents," drawled the man, "not yet, 'tenny rate." His voice had a comedy twang that convinced their none-too-wary ears. [*Continued on page 127*]

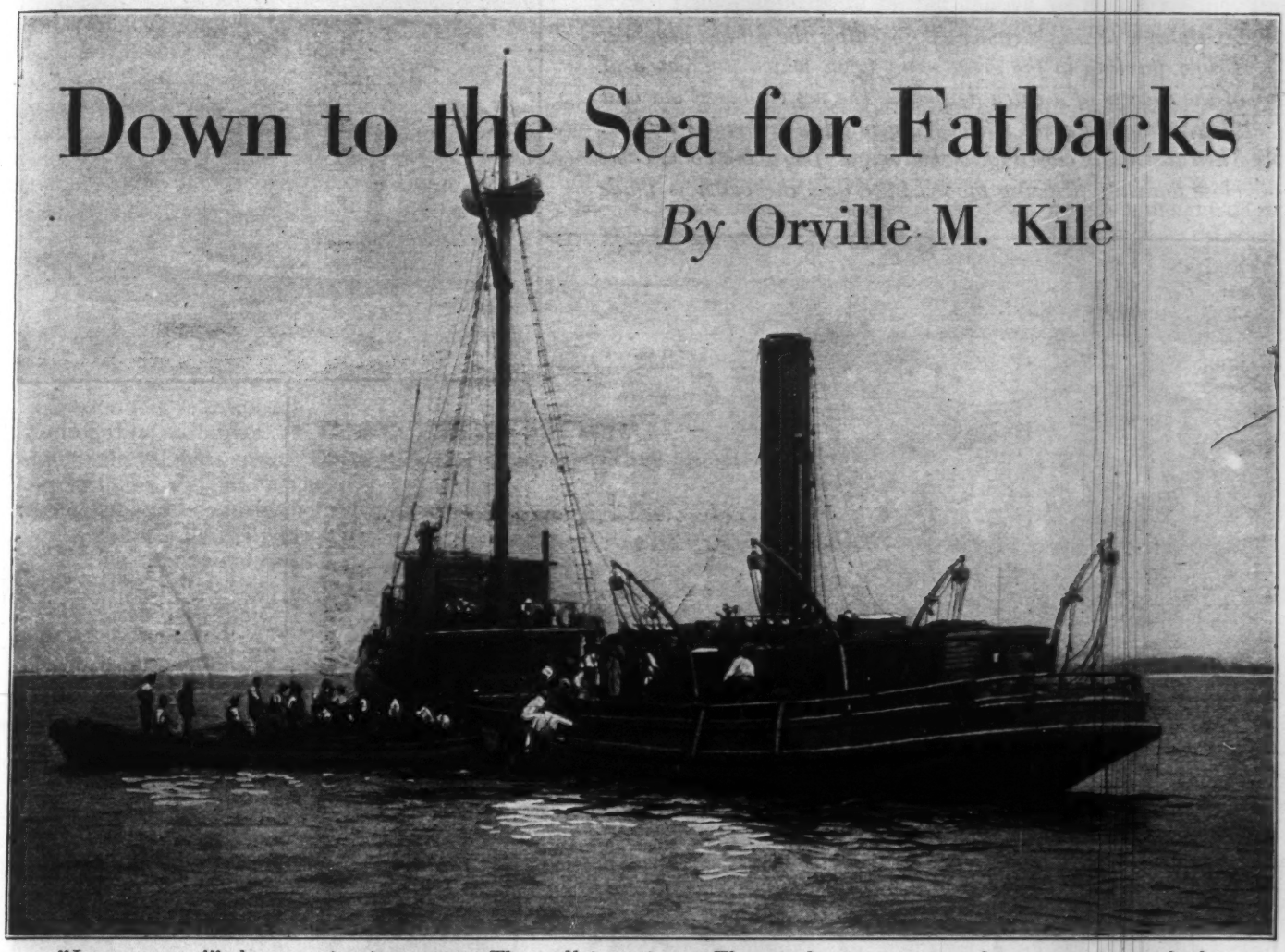


The flag dropped and away they went. As they started, the farmer waved his forlorn hat and sounded the wild war cry of the range rider, "E-e-e-yah! Yip! Yip! Ri-ide 'im, cowboy!"

Half a Million Fish in a Single Catch!—A Picturesque American Industry

Down to the Sea for Fatbacks

By Orville M. Kile



"Lower away!" the captain sings out. Then all is action. The two boats carrying the purse seine with the thirty or more seine men at once drop to the water's surface

THE days of the picturesque whalers and their hardy crews may have passed, but there has arisen almost unheralded another calling of the seas to take its place. Today men go down to the sea in the vicinity of the Virginia Capes to follow the "fatbacks"—the menhaden—just as ardently as ever the salts of other days put out from Gloucester in pursuit of whale. Only now they use steamers, donkey engines, the wireless and sometimes hydroplanes in place of the sailing boats and the crude equipment of old Gloucester days.

Ever since Squanto first showed the Pilgrim pioneers how to make the stubborn Cape Cod soils yield bountiful corn crops by putting a fish in each hill of corn, men have caught fish for fertilizer. It is only within the last decade, however, that this has been developed into an organized industry with modern equipment and extensive output. And now, since the war, this industry is entering upon a new phase which promises to change this product from a fertilizer to a food for cattle, hogs and poultry. Already, hundreds of tons of ham and thousands of dozens of eggs are coming indirectly from the sea.

Probably you never heard of Reedville, Virginia, on lower Chesapeake Bay. Yet if you will look up the 1910 census reports you will find Reedville listed as one of the richest towns *per capita* in the United States. It is true that the *per capita* proviso is a severe limitation since the last census concedes a total of only eight hundred souls to Reedville. Yet this relative wealth is a matter worth noting since it was nearly all made from the menhaden fishing industry.

Captain John Smith, in his reports of explorations on the Virginia coast shortly after 1607, noted the great schools of fish so prevalent at certain seasons. He mentions running into such an "abundance of fish lying with their heads above water, that their barge driving among them, for want of a net, they attempted to catch them with a frying pan."

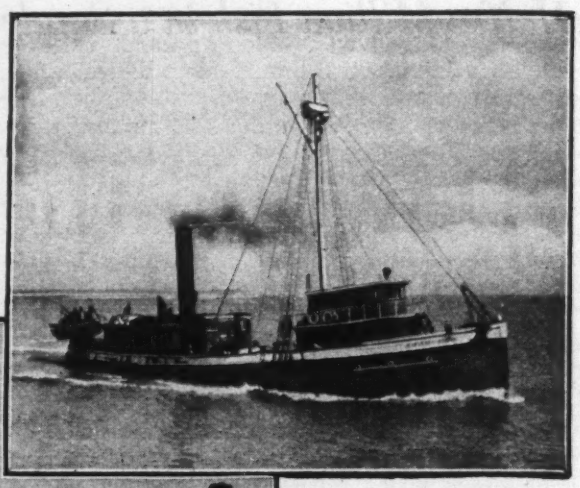
This was the menhaden, a member of the herring family and variously known as alewives, fatbacks, mossbunkers and other names. When caught, these fish are usually about ten inches long, but they are so full of bones and so oily as to be undesirable for human food.

Today there are more than a dozen good-sized menhaden factories on the shores of the lower Chesapeake and as many more scattered along the eastern seaboard from Long Island to Texas. The first factories were established in Rhode Island and along the New England coast. But about 1868 these Northern companies began to establish branches in Virginia. The first factory was located at Reedville, in 1869. Some of these plants represent investments of more than a million dollars—one is rated at two million.

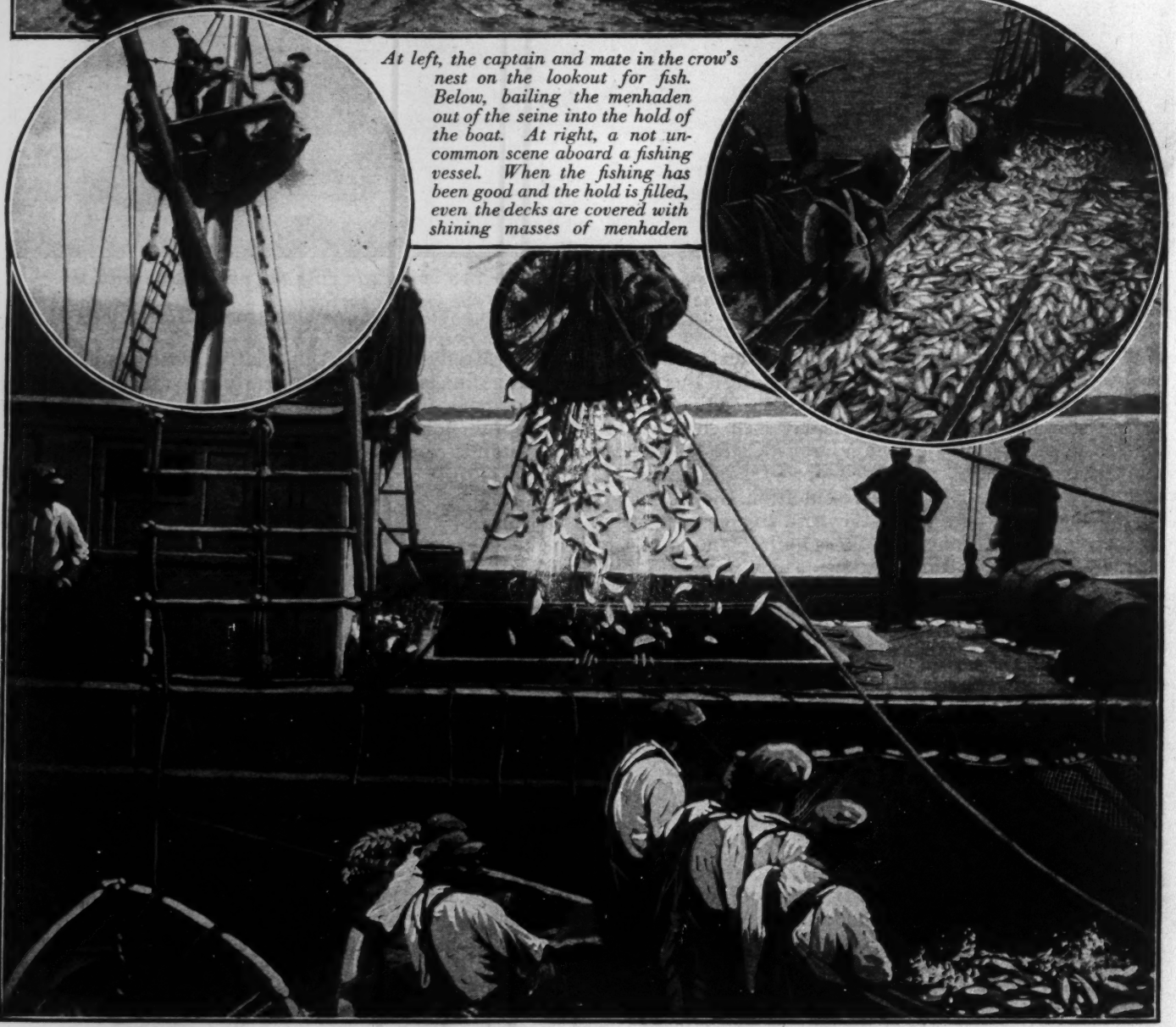
This all-but-unknown industry employs several thousand men and produces annually nearly one hundred thousand tons of fish "scrap" in addition to

A Few Glimpses of a Unique Industry

At right, a fishing steamer approaching the fishing grounds. Below, hauling in the great seine, upon which a great deal of the success of a catch depends. The net is played out and sunk, while the great school of menhaden is herded into it. Then the net is closed at the bottom, the two seine boats come close together, drawing the net in — and the catch is made



At left, the captain and mate in the crow's nest on the lookout for fish. Below, bailing the menhaden out of the seine into the hold of the boat. At right, a not uncommon scene aboard a fishing vessel. When the fishing has been good and the hold is filled, even the decks are covered with shining masses of menhaden



50,000,000 pounds of fish oil. The chances are that some of the paint on your house, some of the soap in your bathroom and some of the artificial lard in your pantry trace their origin to the sea via the menhaden route. If you boast an especially fine string of near-pearls it is possible that these, too, stole their iridescence and lustre from the scales of the lowly menhaden, although in the latter case herring scales are generally used.

Thus it is that this non-edible fish, this denizen of the seas that seems to live on nothing—it sifts out the microscopic plants called diatoms from the water—is made to contribute not only to the nation's breakfast table, but to the beauty, health and satisfactions of our homes and persons.

How the Catch is Made

BUT it is the catching of these fish in such tremendous numbers that appeals most forcibly to the imagination of the landlubber. Fish by the hundreds of thousands and millions seem almost an impossibility to those of us who have spent the better part of a day sitting on a creek bank and counting ourselves lucky if we are able to land a couple of measly four-inch perch.

Let us, then, go aboard a fishing steamer bound down the bay and watch the men make their catch.

It is Sunday night. All boats try to get in to the factory and unload on Saturday night so as to give the men the Sabbath at home.

Some twenty-eight or thirty vessels are tied up at the wharves alongside the factories in Reedville creek. All look much alike except that two or three are considerably larger than the others. These are designed to go into the rougher waters, particularly around Cape Hatteras—the "Graveyard of the Atlantic."

About ten o'clock the crews begin to come aboard, straggling in by two's and three's after a day of rest or recreation at home. Each boat has a white crew of five or six and a negro crew of some thirty men to man the rowboats when they go over the side with the seine. The captains of these boats are well paid, some make five or six thousand dollars for the six months' fishing season and one famous captain gets as much as twelve thousand dollars. They are paid in proportion to the fish they catch. This particular captain, according to one of the negroes in his crew, "thinks like a feesh" and so knows where to find the fish.

The colored crew make up a happy-go-lucky crowd. They work hard for short periods when a "set" is being made, but they usually have long hours with nothing to do but chatter and shoot "craps." And this scheme of life suits them perfectly.

About midnight the whistles blow and one by one the dark, shadowy boats cast off and start down the bay toward the open sea. The captains hope to find fish before they round the capes, but if necessary they are prepared to go outside and follow up or down the coast.

As soon as the first streaks of daylight make the water's surface visible, the captain and his mate take their places in the "crow's nest" in the mast high above the deck, and the vigil starts. The surface of the water is scanned for signs of menhaden schools. The menhaden's peculiar habit of swimming in dense schools proves its undoing. So dense are these schools that some fish are forced to the surface and break through either in clean jumps or enough to roughen the water. But if the water is roughened by waves the darkening effect of the school in the water must be depended upon.

Finally a lookout sights either a rippled surface or one of these reddish-brown spots in the water.

"Thar she blows" used to be the standard signal for action aboard the old whalers, but the menhaden fishers have not developed so picturesque a vernacular. If the school appears to be big enough to be interesting, the captain merely shouts instructions to his men and points out the direction of the school. The boat is steered in close to the school where the captain can plainly see the fish in the water and judge from the dark mass whether the school is big enough to justify a set. Meanwhile every one on board is on the *qui vive*. The negroes have drawn on their cut-off rubber boots and, in bad weather, their oilskins. The small boats are manned and the davit ropes loosened. Each man knows what he is to do when the signal is given and is at his post.

"Lower away!" the captain sings out.

Then all is action. The two boats carrying tne purse seine and the thirty or more seine men drop to the water's surface and set out to lay the thousand-foot net so as to enclose the school. The two boats are lashed together and the seine is played out frantically. The 400-pound lead weight attached to the bottom edge sinks the seine rapidly to its full sixty-foot depth. Large cork floats support the upper edge on the water's surface.

Meantime one man has gone out ahead in a sort of skiff called the "striker" boat. It is his job to direct the laying of the seine and as much as possible to stop the movement of the school and herd it back toward the part of the enclosing seine already laid. He dashes back and forth, beats on the water with an oar and shouts. He must stand up in the boat to watch the movements of the school, yet he must row the boat. So he stands and rows—a most awkward thing to accomplish.

Within three or four minutes the two ends of the net have been brought together in a circle enclosing the school, or such portion of the school as the striker boat has been able to hold back.

Then comes the job of closing the bottom of the net into a sort of bowl-shaped "purse." This is done by pulling together a kind of draw rope—a puckering string, dressmakers would call it. The crews of the two boats heave mightily on these ropes since the school may dive and be lost if the bottom of the net is not closed.

Tremendous Numbers of Fish Caught

THIS closing accomplished, the diameter of the enclosing net is gradually reduced by pulling some of the seine back aboard the two small boats. Soon the evidence of the size of the catch becomes plain. If the school is a big one the fish surge and pull and bulge the net out ten, fifteen or twenty feet under the float rope. They jump and twist and make the water fairly boil.

There may be one hundred thousand, two hundred thousand, even half a million fish inside the net. If half a million fish suddenly take a notion to turn heads downward and bore toward the bottom of the sea, no net used will hold them. They break through and are lost. Even should the net hold, it would be impossible for the men to keep the force of half a million fish-power from pulling the net out of their hands and perhaps sinking the boats.

But usually the catches will run nearer ten, twenty or fifty thousand fish and the net is more manageable. It is pulled aboard the small boats, hand over hand, and the boiling, seething mass of fish is crowded into smaller and smaller space.

But what does this torn place in the net mean? The captain explains that a shark has been attracted by the school struggling inside the net and has taken a mouthful of fish right through the net. No doubt a good share of the catch escaped through this hole—but that is all a part of the game. It goes to make up a part of that alluring, yet illusive

[*Continued on page 125*]

To illustrate "Two Arabian Knights"

A giant negro was standing in the prow of the rowboat, screaming with terror as he gazed on the white face of the girl in the churning water

"The World's Alike All the Way Round," Pete Said—But "Found Diff'rent"

Two Arabian Knights

Breath-taking Adventures When Yank Meets Turk

By Donald McGibeny

Illustrations by Douglas Duer

"BUT ain't you got an uncle somewheres—Philadelphia or somewheres?" Pete argued.

"Not the slightest chance of getting anything from him," I sighed. "I am poison in his sight."

The *Scylla*, eight-hundred tons of ancient metal and timber and the largest of the line of steamers owned by "Cheap John of Piræus," steamed slowly down the rocky, barren coast of Asia Minor. Her passengers and crew sprawled on the decks, enjoying the continual siesta the warm blanket of Mediterranean sunshine made imperative. Behind us, on the awning-covered after deck, a half-dozen people, of almost as many nationalities, gazed at the wearying monotony of mountainous coast, whose angular projections were blurred and distorted by the shimmering heat waves. Here and there, far up the steep slopes like an eagle's nest among the crags, a minaret and a few square, stone houses revealed a mountain village, inhabited by some fierce tribe of Druses.

"But in a case like this," Pete continued, "if he knew you didn't have a red; if you told him you'd starve to death unless he come through, he'd do somethin', wouldn't he?"

I let my eye wander below to a clutter of Arab families with the unimaginable litter of animals and household goods they always carry with them when traveling.

"He would, very properly, commend my soul to the devil and remind me that adversity is the greatest teacher in the world. No, there are two reasons why I cannot appeal to mine uncle. In the first place, he will have nothing to do with me. In the second, I will have nothing to do with him—thus, we are in perfect accord for the first time in our lives."

Philosophically, Pete pulled an old tobacco sack from his pocket, tore the end off a month-old newspaper and rolled a cigarette, while I returned to a casual study of the Oriental life on the deck below us. In the scanty shade offered by a packing case, a fat woman nursed a baby around whose face flies swarmed. She noticed my gaze and whisked a veil over her pock-marked features, yet made no attempt to cover the breast the babe clutched so contentedly as it fed. Such is modesty. Near by, her liege lord dozed, his back against a chicken coop containing three dejected pullets. Between them sat a boy of six with both arms around the neck of a goat, crooning an age-old, minor melody. Pete took a deep inhale and returned to the topic of the day.

"Your uncle's rich, you said."

"Unbelievably rich."

"Old?"

"On the edge of the grave."

"An' no kids?"

"None that he will confess to."

"An' you ain't done nothin' to get in on all that gravy?"

"On the contrary, due to the strict admonitions of my beloved parents, who left me in his care, I was his lackey, his slave, the white mameluke of his household. When he spoke, I jumped; when he smiled, I fawned; when he frowned, I cringed. In other words, I became a thoroughly detestable jumping jack for his amusement. My good Aloysius, the war was the salvation of many a man, but it helped no one more than your humble servant."

"Say—lay off that Aloysius stuff!" my companion growled, always irritated when I used his middle name. "Do you mean the old boy crabbed at your goin' to war?"

"Not a bit of it. He was justly proud of my resolve to die for my country—so, he persuaded one of his high military friends to arm me with a mahogany desk and typewriter and to permit me to crouch in the shell-riddled trenches of the quartermaster's department in Washington."

"You're usin' a lot of langwidge, but you ain't sayin' nothin'."

"TO put it plainly, then, when I suddenly decided to enlist in a regiment that would see active service, he grumbled. When I refused to take higher than private's rank, he considered it a smirch on his honor, and, having once tasted freedom and understood how thoroughly despicable was my position in his household—when I refused, at the end of the war, to resume my old rôle of flunky, slavey, white mameluke, *et al.*, he grew quite apoplectic and said that I might go to the devil. And, my dear Pete, considering the low state of our finances and our great distance from home, I fear we are rather close to our destination."

Pete drew a last suck from his tattered cigarette, pinched out the light, unrolled the wet stub and scraped the remaining crumbs of tobacco back into his sack.

"A niggardly and disgusting habit," I commented.

He looked at me sharply, then turned his back on me, pulled his faded cap over one eye and strolled away. I saw he was offended and moved after him.

"Just lay off that 'nigger' stuff after this," warned Pete. "You can criticize—you don't smoke—but since we ain't got no more jack to buy tobacco, I'm goin' to save what I got."

Truly a mismated pair—Peter Aloysius O'Gaffney and Wallace Dangerfeld Phelps III. "Pete of the Gallopin' I," cavalry sergeant for nine years, erstwhile gun-toter in an East-side gang, tow-headed runt, with the manners and morals of a rough-neck and the soul of a saint; ne'er-do-well adventurer; soldier of no fortune; at home in every country in the world; master of no language—not even his own—yet able to get what he wanted from anybody, from an English earl to a half-caste Hindoo woman.

Of myself, you need know little more than you have already learned. I am too tall for my weight, too independent for my position, too impecunious for my pocketbook and too well educated to know anything of value.

The first fact explains why I was advised to take a long sea voyage by the doctor who examined me after the Armistice; the second explains why, instead of taking the voyage on my uncle's bounty and remaining the sycophantic servant and heir of a crabbed old man, I rebelled and traveled, a disinherited outcast, in the excellent company of Peter. My impecunious ways, combined with a jarring letter from Philadelphia cutting off my income, explains why we were penniless, and the fourth quality listed above explains why I refused to worry about it.

A deep-throated blast from the ship's whistle and the turning of her nose toward shore brought all the sleepy passengers to the rail. We were approaching a small village, huddled at the foot of a mountain like a chick under a mother hen. To my mind, there is no more picturesque country in the world than Syria, despite its monotony. The brown and yellow mountains, rising in rugged strength sheer from the sea; the villages, each with its needle of a minaret pointing like a warning finger into the blue sky; the green olive groves, to which the eye wanders gratefully after the blistering whiteness of the sandy spit—all this thrums a responsive chord within me. Pete, who takes only a passive interest in even the most picturesque landscape, called me back to the vital question of economics.

"Anis' vulture-faced guardian shook a bony fist at me"

"We got to find money somewheres—that's all they are of it."

"Right — undoubtedly right. But why bother about it now? We have three more days upon this noble vessel, with its noble bunks and its noble food. Three days, Peter, to gird the loins for the battle of existence. Why inject the sour thoughts of tomorrow into the sweetness of our present life?"

"Some one's got to do it—when you're travelin' wit' a nut," he answered laconically. He leaned his arms on the rail and looked down into the blue depths for a moment, then reopened a line of thought I had hoped we were done with.

"How much money did you say that uncle of yours had?"

"I didn't say, but I think it is in the neighborhood of seven million dollars."

Pete looked up at me incredulously.

"An' you give up a chance to get all that jack?"

"For my soul's salvation, Peter."

"You should worry about your soul wit' seven million berries. Judas, I just wisht I had a chance at it."

Two small boats, laden with passengers and fruit, started for the *Scylla* as she dropped anchor a half mile or so off shore. There was no harbor to the town before us.

"Leavin' out your soul an' all that white mam'luke stuff, why'd you do it?"

"I wanted to see the world, Pete, while I was still young enough to get its inspiration."

"To see the woild——" scoffed Pete, spitting over the side into the water. "They ain't nothin' to see in the woild. I been around it three times an' I'd ought to know. It's all the same—all just alike: the same booze joints, the same hooker shops, the same theayters. 'Course, in Egypt, they got the Spinach—Spinix—whatever it is. Anyway, they got it."

"The what?"

"That thing made out of rock in the desert."

"Oh — you mean the Sphinx."

"Sure—that's what I said. They ain't nothin' like that nowhere else that I know of, but that's about all."

"What about the leaning tower of Pisa, and the Grand Canal of Venice and the——"

"Don't gimme the laugh," grinned Pete, interrupting me. "Why, I seen that leanin' tower an' it's a joke. It can't touch the Metropolitan tower—honest. The thing's on the blink. I bet some gov'ment contractor done it, an' when the thing went bluey he tried to make the people think he built it that way a-purpose."

Realizing that this was, in truth, the way a practical American would view the thing, I momentarily closed my ears to his philosophy, and, lacking more solid nourishment, I fed my eyes on a small fishing smack, whose scarlet leg o' mutton sail drooped listlessly in the copper heat of midday, and drank in the spicy, scented air of Syria. Which, considering everything, is a very excellent meal.

NOW, where all morning long the prow of the *Scylla* had slipped through a sea as calm as glass, we were no sooner anchored than she began to rise and fall lazily in a ground swell that made itself felt with sickening regularity. The loss of motion, too, allowed the noonday heat to settle around the ship, undissipated by any breeze—a breathless swelter. There was something uncanny about that sea. Where five minutes before there had been no sign of a wave, now, long swelling breakers began to roll in

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toward shore. They seemed to come from nowhere.

Behind us, the Mediterranean stretched, like a silver sheet, to the horizon. The light-blue sky above was unspotted by a single cloud. The dead heat that hung around us was untroubled by the slightest breeze, yet heavy rollers, starting a short distance back of our stern and growing more boisterous every minute, rolled the *Scylla* about with loutish playfulness, as if to tear her loose from her anchorage.

"What's happenin' to this boat?" demanded Pete, a pugnacious look in his eye.

FOR all his travels, he was none too good a sailor. He was an in and outer. I have seen him weather the heaviest kind of storm, unaffected by the tossing of the ship, only to curl up in dejected misery at the easy rolling of the vessel as we approached land. Seasickness may be purely physical, but I noticed that Peter was far longer in succumbing if I could get him angry.

"You're not going to be seasick again, Aloysius. It's your only weakness—your one vice. Don't give in to it! Stop pampering yourself!"

He flared up at once.

"The way you talk you'd think it was fun or somethin'."

"You know I've managed to save a little brandy and you're pretending to be sick so I will give it to you."

"I didn't ast you for it, did I?"

"You were just about to. After all, seasickness is mental——"

"Mental—me eye."

"You think you are going to be sick and you become sick. Remember the advice the missionary gave——"

"Yea—old Kid Stupid," Pete grunted. "He was sicker'n I was before we was through."

"Nevertheless, his advice was excellent."

"Just advise this boat to quick rockin'! Will you?"

"He said to think of mountains—snowclad peaks, broad ranges—repeat the lines of a poem; hum the lilt of a song!"

"Aw—shut up!"

As the ship lurched up sideways and settled down again with a slight shudder, Pete started unsteadily for our cabin—one of a dozen doors that opened on the deck.

"The flask is in the bottom of my musette bag, Peter," I called after him.

I turned back to the rail and noticed, for the first time, that a slight haze was obscuring the sun and the awning over the poop was listlessly flapping in the ghost of a breeze. The open sea behind us no longer lay smooth, but was choppy and troubled—the color of dull brass, with a thousand points of light where the sun glinted on the water. Whitecaps, like the fluttered greeting of a handkerchief, topped the waves rolling past and disappeared in a froth of bubbles.

MY interest was absorbed in the two boats that had started from shore as we dropped anchor. One, filled with fruit, had turned back, the native boatman, standing in the stern, holding the boat steady so the tide might sweep him in. The other, still two hundred yards from the *Scylla*, was battling desperately against the mounting waves in an attempt to bring three passengers aboard. Amidships crouched two black bundles—women completely veiled. A giant negro, his head swathed in a red cloth, his obese body clothed in a gaily striped garment, half stood, half knelt on the side of a pile of boxes and bundles, forward, jabbering with excitement and fear at a man and a boy sweating over the oars.

For all their feverish exertions, they seemed to be making no headway—bobbing up and down, cork-like, in the same spot. On account of the weight of the luggage in the prow, the boat dug her nose into every third wave, tossing a shower of salty spray over the negro and the huddled women. At each recurrence, the black would utter a shrill scream of malediction and clamber down from his exposed perch, only to crawl back and resume his jabbering. His antics were exactly those of an angry monkey.

The breeze was freshening and the sun had almost disappeared when an officer—he was everything from second mate to ship's doctor—rushed up the steps from the engine room, clutching a pair of binoculars, and hurried aft. A dun-colored cloud, nothing but a smudge on the horizon a moment before, was mounting rapidly and tingeing the whole western sky a poisonous-looking yellow.

Up forward, the captain descended from the bridge and followed a sailor to the side. From their excitement, I guessed that we were dragging anchor. My suspicions were confirmed when the captain again mounted the bridge, disappeared inside the wheelhouse and blew a blast on the whistle. At the same time, the dinner gong rang below. Ordinarily, it was the signal for a general movement among the passengers—a welcome break in the monotony of the day—but the drunken wallowing of the steamer had driven them to their cabins or their steamer chairs.

I FELT none too hungry. While, for some blessed reason, I never get seasick, I am not one of the rugged type who gobble pickled tripe and smoke black cigars during rough weather, merely to demonstrate my Herculean vigor. No. A breast of chicken or a chop—a pot of tea—enough. Too, there was an aroma that hugged that tiny dining saloon that repelled me—the dead fragrance of much garlic and *vino*. I decided, on the whole, it would be better to wait a bit before chancing food.

By this time, the officer who had run aft with the binoculars was bawling instructions and orders to the rowboat through a megaphone, though his voice was obliterated by the noise of the anchor chains dragging through hawsers and the thudding rumble of donkey engine and windlass. Though the shore boat had made some progress, being only a hundred feet away, it was plain to be seen that the boatmen were afraid to come closer for fear of being dashed against the side of the vessel. Jabbered at by the terrified negro, bawled at by captain and mate, they struggled at the oars in a half-hearted, discouraged manner.

The captain dashed into the chart room and there was a furious jangle of bells below. The answering throb showed we were under way. Slowly, the *Scylla* crept forward and turned into the trough of the sea, edging closer to the bobbing craft. Two stalwart sailors took places at the bottom of the companion ladder, armed with hooks and a coil of rope, ready to grapple the boat as soon as it came within reach.

As I saw a wave swirl, knee-deep about the bare legs of those sailors, I began to feel an excited anxiety. At best, the transfer of passengers was going to be a precarious undertaking. Had the two women been young American girls with all the freedom of sport skirts, it would have been difficult enough, but I couldn't see a chance for them, swathed, as they were, in voluminous garments and impeded by the ridiculous veils which custom forced them to wear. Death rides on swift wings. I would have called Peter, but feared that if I left the rail I would miss the climax, myself.

A life buoy was attached to the grillwork of the rail

and I fingered the knot, half minded to untie it. The captain had left the steering to some one else and was standing at the top of the companion ladder, clutching his black spade beard with one hand and swearing horribly. I felt a nudge at my elbow and found Pete standing beside me. He was a pale pea-green in color and smelled strongly of brandy.

"You're just in time," I said. "How do you feel?"

"Worse'n that. But listen to me——"

"I think you're going to have an opportunity to rescue two nice, fat Turkish ladies, Peter."

"The young Turk rose and strode over to our table in a fury. In an instant the place himself with a chair. And I grimly understood from the expressions

"HUSH up while I tell you somethin'. You know that little Wop who's been followin' us?"

"They'll never make it," I muttered, engrossed in the proceedings below. One of the sailors had tossed the rope end to the chattering negro and was hauling the rowboat in, hand over hand. The other sailor braced his body against the first to guard against his being tugged into the sea, and stood ready with the boat hook. At one moment the shore craft rode a wave as high as their shoulders; the next, sank far below the dripping step on which the men were standing.

"Listen to what I'm sayin', will you? That fat little Wop's been snoopin' around our room again."

Pete was obsessed with the idea that we were being followed. It all had to do with some old thing he had met in Paris before I had joined forces with him. From the little he would tell me, I judged the lady was a veteran of that other army, recruited from the streets, that never knows an armistice. She had recognized the value of having Pete as a member of a gang of dope smugglers to which she belonged—his infatuation and, more especially, his uniform were of inestimable value in covering her operations. There had been a clash with the police and Peter had been caught. His experiences in getting free had inculcated a desire for travel.

"Don't be ridiculous!" I scoffed. "That little man isn't following us."

"Then what's the reason for his snoopin' around our room—tell me that? An' why is ut—— Holy cat!"

The expected had happened. A huge roller crashed the rowboat against the companion ladder. The sailors leaped up the stairs for their lives, dropping the rope attached to the boat. One of the women half rose from her seat just before the crash and was toppled into the sea. I tugged frantically at the knot that held the life buoy, but it had been tied some twenty years before and my fingers were all thumbs. It was tied too strongly to the grille for me to wrench it free.

"Your knife, Pete! Quick!"

While he fumbled in his pocket for the knife, I searched the water for a glimpse of the woman who had fallen in. The sailors were standing, undecided, halfway up the smashed companion ladder. As the captain squealed and tore at his beard, they ran up and forward to a small lifeboat, hanging on the davits.

"Oh, the fools!" I murmured wrathfully—for there was no time for that. The rowboat from shore was already fifteen feet from the *Scylla* and drifting past the stern. One of the oars was gone. The negro was standing in the prow beating his breast and face and screaming with terror. Useless to look for help there. The crowd of Arabs below added their voices to the general din of jangling bells and shouted orders. They wailed and shrieked dismally in sympathetic mourning. Passengers, stupid with seasickness, staggered from their cabins to find out what had happened.

While I was still horrified at the suddenness of it all, I glimpsed a sodden black bundle and the blurred white of a face churned over and over in the sea below me. Without thinking of what I was doing, only knowing that something had to be done at once, I tore off my coat and shoes, climbed over the rail and dived.

The water was surprisingly warm. I felt that I would never stop going down. For a second I was panic-stricken at the thought that I might come up under the *Scylla*. I fought my way up and up, but as I reached the top, before I could take a breath, before I could open my eyes, I was buried under a smother of foam. There may be some who can remember each thought that came to them as they were drowning, but I am not one of

was in an uproar. I saw angry, shouting men advancing from all sides; Pete arming on the faces of the mob that Pete and I were fighting for our lives"

them. I knew when I came to the surface the second time and tried to swim that I had no more chance in that sea than a rag in a washing machine.

All my swimming had been done in placid lakes and white-tiled swimming pools. I was considered quite good in the club tank. But this—— There was no chance to swim here. I no longer thought about saving anybody but myself. I could have cried with regret at ever having left the ship. Every time I saw daylight, I was smothered by another wave In a blur, the black side of the *Scylla* loomed in front of me. The next moment I was flailed against her side with stunning impact. Something swept against my legs as I was sucked back by the water, and I grabbed for it.

At once, I was pulled down, down, by something that had attached itself to me and wouldn't let go. I kicked at it. I pulled at it with my hands. Death grimaced at me hideously. My lungs were empty. I felt I would burst unless I got air. Panic numbed my brain. No past arose to accuse me. I was strangling to death in a terrible present. Suddenly, I fell fifteen thousand feet, leaving behind me a fiery trail of sparks like the tail of a comet.

Chapter II

THE first time I came to, something fiery hot was scalding my mouth and throat. I tried to struggle free. A moment before, devils had been gouging my eyes with burning irons. It was all part of an exquisite system of torture they were putting me through. I shrilled curses at them and did my best to fight them off, but they were too strong for me. After they had forced the boiling lead down my throat they seemed content to leave me in peace.

The next thing I remember was being called from a great distance. I didn't want to answer. I hoped they would go away without finding me. I kept very quiet, but they kept coming closer and closer and I couldn't find any place to hide. I opened my eyes to find Pete bending over me shouting something that had no sense to it. His shouting hurt my head. Knowing that no one could expect an answer to such gibberish, I paid no attention to him, but immediately drifted back to sleep.

When I became fully conscious, the cabin was filled with sunlight that scorched my eyes and seared my brain. I moved my hand up, weakly, to shield my eyes from the glare—and touched a bandage. For a moment I couldn't decide whether it was on my hand or my head. Thought came slowly. What had happened? Where was I and why? On a boat—of course. Slowly, painfully, like putting together the pieces of a picture puzzle, memory flooded back. I hadn't drowned—that was certain. The bandage on my head puzzled me. Where did I get that?

I attempted to rise, but at the first stabbing pain in my head, I sank back in the pillows. A paper rustled close by. Pete! Very gradually, I shifted over on my side. Sitting cross-legged on the floor of the cabin with his back to the bunk, was a man, but it wasn't Pete. I studied the fat contours of his back and his slightly bald head and placed him. It was the Greek Peter had insisted was following us. He was engrossed in reading a letter. The envelope was on the floor at his side. I noticed its peculiar color. It was one of my letters. Of all the nerve! I allowed him to finish the page before I spoke.

"What the dickens are you doing there?"

He bounded to his feet like a cat surprised out of a sound sleep by the sudden appearance of a dog. His spectacles fell to the floor. The points of his mustache twitched.

"*Pardon, monsieur!*"

"Yes—I think you should beg my pardon That is my letter you are reading."

"Yes-s." He spoke with acute preciseness.

"Well—what do you mean by coming into my cabin and reading my letters?"

"I do not understand."

"Oh, yes, you do. Let's see, that letter is from Louise Lewis. If you can make head or tail out of that you can understand everything I say. Look here—are you following us?"

"I am ver-ry sorry."

He stooped for his glasses, laid the letter on top of my musette bag and started to edge toward the door.

"Wait a minute!" I called.

"You will excuse, please!"

With a frightened nod, he stepped outside, and closed the door after him, while I tried, in vain, to understand the object of his visit. My first thought was that he was a common thief, but who ever heard of a thief sitting down in the midst of his work to peruse a letter? He had joined the ship at Piræus, and this was the third time, to my knowledge, that he had entered our cabin. The answer could only lie in Pete.

While I was still staring at the woodwork above me and turning the question over in my mind, that worthy Irishman entered. As soon as he saw I was awake and conscious, his lips lifted in a shy smile—a rarity worth waiting for.

"Glory be! You're yerself again."

"Praise God, I am. Come in, sit down and tell me what happened to me."

"Most everythin'. In the first place, you swallyed enough sea water to sink a fish. Then you near got your head broke again' the side of the boat."

"Who saved me from drowning?"

He stared at me a moment, while a dull flush swept from his neck upward.

"One of the naygers."

"You mean—one of the Greeks?"

"They're all the same, ain't they? Eytalians, Greeks, Hunyaks——they're all naygers."

"Which one did it? I'll have to give him something."

"You ain't goin' to do nothin' of the kind," he snapped, looking up at me fiercely. "You ain't goin' to give 'em nothin'!"

"You saved me, didn't you, Pete?"

"Well, what if I did? I got the right to make an idjit out of myself if I want to, ain't I?"

I had to laugh at his embarrassment, but I didn't try to thank him.

"Listen, Aloysius! When you were with that girl in Paris, what did you do?"

"What didn't I do!" he replied gloomily, hauling the dirty sack of tobacco from his pocket.

"Tell me!"

"Now don't go gettin' nosey, Duke! I made a sucker out of meself, for one thing."

He tore a piece off the envelope lying on top of the letter on my musette bag and tried to fashion a cigarette from the stiff paper.

"The only reason I ask—that fat little Greek was sitting on the floor, there, reading one of my letters when I woke up."

PETE stopped in the act of licking the edge of the paper and stared up at me.

"He was?"

He finished rolling the cigarette, frowning hard. After he had lighted it, I said:

"I can't make out what he's after."

"That's easy—he's after the dope on me."

"What for?"

"Never mind."

He climbed to his feet and looked out of the door.

"You didn't kill anybody while you were in France, did you, Pete?"

"Only squareheads."

"Then what's he after you for? Hadn't you better tell me about it?"

"Why should I?" he burst out, turning on me in a blaze of anger. "I been tellin' you things all along you wouldn't believe. Didn't I tell you we was bein' followed? Didn't I tell you the Wop was snoopin' aroun' the room here? 'Oh, no,' you says." He raised his voice to a mincing falsetto. "'Don't be re-diculous!' you says. Re-diculous, was I?"

"Well, you needn't get mad about it," I said, with a smile.

In the winking of an eye, his temper vanished.

"Never mind me layin' you out. I'm only disgusted at meself, that's all, for not usin' the brains God give me."

"Why won't you tell me about it? In this case, I'll admit I was rather dense, but sometimes I've shown intelligence."

"When? You didn't show it wit' your uncle or you'd have some of his jack. You didn't show it wit' the Wop, an' you sure didn't show it when you tried to be a mermaid, day before yestiddy. No—I'll keep me troubles to meself, but I'm gonna have a talk wit' that berry right now, an' find out what he knows an' what he only guesses at."

As he started out, I asked: "What is this bandage on my head for?"

"You got a nasty cut when you mistook yourself for a torpedo an' tried to get into the ship through the side. Don't worry! None of the bone was broke. It was too thick."

WHEN he had gone, I raised my dizzy head from the pillows and sat up. I was dismayed at the effort to descend from the upper bunk to the floor. Halfway down, I was so seized with nausea, I determined to go back to bed, but found I was too weak to climb back. The *Scylla* was still rolling and when I stepped to the floor, I collapsed like a deflated balloon. For several moments I sat there, surprised at my own weakness, but finally managed to struggle into my clothes, lying on my back most of the time, as one does when dressing in the berth of a sleeping car.

By dint of arduous labor, I got to my feet and surveyed myself in the mirror over the washstand. In its blurred depths I noted that the voluminous bandage around my head gave me the look of a turbaned Turk. This effect was added to by a three-days' growth of beard—and my beard grows very fast. I would have died rather than attempt to shave, for there were no call bells in the cabins and nothing but cold water in the water receptacle. There was no necessity, anyway, for I cared not a whit for the opinion of my fellow passengers.

I moved to the door and stepped out on deck. It was a glorious day, all blue and white and gold. We were running only a mile offshore and the coastline was painful to the eye in its clear-cut perspective. The sunlight, while warm, was not oppressive, due to the fresh breeze that stung the nostrils and wafted to us the pungent smell of the land.

While my presence was at once noted and commented upon by the other passengers on deck, there was none of that effusive greeting that I could have expected on an Atlantic steamer. True, as soon as I had sunk into a steamer chair, an English missionary, Cheesebrood by name—a frightful bore with a walrus mustache and big, square horse teeth—came to inquire about my health. He was the one whom Pete designated as Kid Stupid.

"It was an astonishingly reckless sort of thing to do," he drawled, "but—what I mean to say—it was rather

At the turning of a corner a man bumped into Pete. "What—ho!" he said cheerily. "By Jove, well met! I think we've met before, haven't we?"

idiotic, don't you think, you bein' unable to swim, and all that?"

"But I can swim," I protested.

"Oh—really?" His look and tone were frankly dubious.

"That is, I can swim in a lake or the usual surf, but no one could have swum—no one could have swam—what I mean is, that no one could have—have done anything in that sea."

"That is just the point I am makin'. You shouldn't have tried it. Didn't it occur to you——"

"Nothing occurred to me but that there was a woman overboard and something had to be done quickly."

"Yes, but I mean to say——"

I was getting mad. Pete's criticism I could stand, but this Cheese person——

"I see," I interrupted, "and you're quite right. I should have let the woman drown. That's what you mean, isn't it?"

"Not at all. Certainly not!"

"By the way—did she drown?"

"No. There she is, standing over there."

I looked in the direction of his nod. Standing at the rail with her back to me, habited in the shapeless black of the Orient, stood a dumpy, short figure. She seemed uninteresting enough. I regretted my zeal in attempting rescue.

"I'll admit, if you like, that it was a ridiculous thing to do, risking my own life needlessly, but, you see, I thought I would be of assistance."

As I stopped talking, I looked again toward the Syrian woman and suddenly felt as if I had come in contact with a live wire. Cheesebrood said something, but I didn't hear it. The black figure at the rail had turned and was looking in my direction, and, instead of being an old woman, as I had thought, she was a girl and ravishingly beautiful. As she noticed my burning gaze, she pulled her head veil over her face and turned away again, but the sight of her perfect features and beautiful dark eyes sent an ecstatic thrill through me. It may have been the personal touch in having tried to rescue her; it may have been the atmosphere or the fact that I have known very few girls in my life and so was extremely susceptible, but I was certainly thrilled with pleasurable excitement. I felt much better.

"On second thought—I am inclined to think that my action was not ridiculous at all. On the contrary, it was quite the thing to do, at the time—I might almost say it savored of genius."

"But, my dear fellow, you are flatly contradicting yourself. Just a moment ago you admitted risking your life to no purpose."

"Did I say that? I don't remember it. In fact, I distinctly recall saying that I had but *one* purpose in mind—to save the life of a beautiful girl—and you, my dear sir, should be the last person to scoff at my efforts."

"I am not scoffing," protested the missionary.

"You'll pardon me if I seem to recognize a scoff when I see one. After all, aren't you engaged in a similar work to what I attempted. You save souls, but I don't laugh and scoff, even though your efforts may be as clumsy as mine."

He was stung to the quick by my raillery. His near-sighted eyes held no friendship as he retorted:

"You will forgive me if I remind you that I have had a deal more experience at saving souls than you seemed to show at life-saving."

I watched him go with no regret—until he stopped to talk to the Syrian girl. Curse the luck! He knew her. I began to think quickly on the best way of mollifying him. With difficulty, I struggled to my feet and walked toward them, unsteadily.

"Oh, Mr. Cheesebrood!" I called, and stopped a few paces away, desperately afraid the girl would leave if I came closer. Cheesebrood scowled at me as he looked around. "I'm afraid you took what I said in bad spirit," I explained. "I don't want you to think I was casting any reflections on your efforts with the heathen."

I COULD have cut my tongue off after uttering that last word. From the quick look of resentment she gave me, I saw the girl had heard.

"Did I show a bad spirit from anything you said, Mr. Phelps?" the missionary asked in a shocked, sanctimonious tone that was hard to endure. "I was not cognizant of showing an un-Christian spirit. Pray explain, so I may correct it."

I forced a smile to my lips, though I wanted to choke him. There was one subject, I knew, on which the man was completely *fou*. I knew, because he had cornered me for three hours, the first day out, and preached it as if he would never have done. An awful price to pay for an introduction to that girl, but one look from those beautiful dark-brown eyes decided me.

"Perhaps it was my mistake—what I really wanted to speak to you about was to remind you that you never finished telling me about the Decretals of Constantine."

He blinked at me thoughtfully.

"I thought you were losing interest."

"Now, I ask you—my dear man, how did you get such an impression? I thought it all intensely interesting—just like a novel. They—they were vital in the growth

of Christianity, I think you said that, didn't you?"

Cheesebrood's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"Exactly—do you feel strong enough to walk about the deck?"

"Ah, no—no." I shook my head with resignation. "I'm afraid not. I think we had better stay right here."

"I have it. We'll go back where you were sitting. I will draw up another chair. There's quite a lot more—the most absorbing part of the entire history—it embraces the growth of the church during the next seventy-eight years. I think we had better sit down to it, where we will not be disturbed."

"But—but look here, old fellow—just a minute! Don't—don't you think Miss—the young lady you were just talking to—I'm sure she would like to hear it."

"I rather think not," he replied, curtly, and hastened to fetch a steamer chair.

I was in for it. For an hour I was compelled to pay attention to his interminable drool. When I use the word "compelled," I speak advisedly. It was impossible for me to move, for he sat very close, clutching my sleeve with one hand while he tapped out various points he was making with a long forefinger. It was just before midday and Cheesebrood had reached his second wind when I happened to look toward the stern. For a moment I couldn't believe my eyes. There was Pete standing very close to my Syrian beauty, looking into her eyes and engaging in what seemed to be a very amusing tête-à-tête.

"BUT, how did you meet her, Pete?" I questioned him in our cabin after luncheon. I had removed my head bandage and was doing my best to scrape the whiskers off my chin with a very dull razor.

"It was while you was sick."

"Of course—just my luck. Who introduced you?"

He looked at me stupidly.

"How do you mean?"

"You didn't go right up and speak to her, did you?"

"Sure I did—why not? She ain't deef."

"Can she speak English?"

"Just as good as me."

Here, I cut a gash in my lip.

"Judas, I'd like to smoke a cigarette," Pete sighed, "but I only got enough tobacco to last till we get ashore if I smoke four a day. Say, I caught up wit' that little Wop. I don't think he'll do no more snoopin' around our cabin—but he's after sumpin'."

"What did you do to him?"

"Oh, I give him a neck massadg an' told him if he didn't keep outa here, I'd separate him like cream—but he knows sumpin'."

"What makes you think that?"

He would say no more, so I questioned him further about the girl.

"I've told you, ain't I? I met her when you was in bed."

"Yes. But, Aloysius, you have no conception of the number of conventions you have trampled on. Just remember you are not in America or France, you are in Turkey. I don't know what you may have gotten us into. A Moslem never allows a stranger to see his women unveiled. To address a Turkish girl in public is considered a deadly insult. We may both be knifed in the back for your presumption."

"Well, it was this way. She was lookin' for some one to thank for savin' her life," he explained, in all seriousness. "Some said it was you an' some said it was me. I come along an' heard the argyment an' when I see how pretty she was, I let her know it was me."

I whirled around, dabbing at the cut on my lip with a towel. "Oh, you did?"

"Sure. If you'd 'a' been there, I mighta gave you part of the credick, but you wasn't."

"Naturally, you didn't explain that I was the one who jumped overboard after her. What did she think I was doing?"

"Well, I told her you needed a bath terrible bad."

He was looking at his hands. I wanted to believe he was joking, but it was just the sort of thing he *would* say.

"She wouldn't believe nobody would jump into a lot of cold water, just to get clean—she bein' Turkish—so I explained that you sometimes had fits."

The last, he said almost in a whisper. He tried to keep from laughing, but the strain was too great. At sight of my expression, he rolled over on his back and roared until the tears ran down his cheeks.

"I was funnin' wit' you, Duke. The girl knows all about you an' is crazy to meet you."

"Still having your little joke, aren't you?" I said sourly.

"Now don't go gettin' high-hat wit' me!" fired back Pete. "She does want to meet you—though why, Heaven knows."

"After taking all the credit for saving her life and making me out a nonsensical idiot, you are now quite willing to have me meet the lady."

"I took credit for nothin'," he glowered at me.

"That is what you told me."

"I was kiddin' you."

"But you couldn't very well help making yourself out a hero, that first time you met, when I was in bed and she was so terribly anxious to thank some one for saving her life."

"Go on! How d'you get that way? I never seen the dame until this mornin' before chow. She was standin' at the rail, lookin' kinda hinkty——"

"What?"

"Lookin' hinkty—it's a way a woman looks when she wants to talk to somebody close to her she ain't met. Oh, you'll get on to their tricks when you've seen as many of 'em as I have. So I walked over an' give her the eye. She may be a Turk, but she's got Broadway manners. It wa'n't no time at all before we was chinnin'. She goes to a girl's school, run by Americans, up here at Constantinople. It's prob'ly what makes her human. She was visitin' a girl friend at that town back there an' is on her way home."

"Did you find out where she lives?"

"Cert'n'y. That's the first thing I always find out. She lives where we're goin'—Kieff. Pretty soft for us, Duke. If we run outa jack in this town, we'll hunt up her old man an' ast him for a job."

"Pete," I said, "how many times must I explain that you can't do things over here that you do at home?"

"GO on! The woild's the same all over. I got busted in Vincennes, Indiana, once. Went to a dance at a church sociable. Met the mayor's daughter an' her old man got me a job as night watchman just to keep me f'm comin' to the house. It'll be different here, but it'll work out the same. She's high-toned. Them people that was in the boat wit' her when she spilled out—they was her chaperones. Say—what's a Enoch?"

"A what?"

"A Enoch."

For a moment I was at a loss to think what he meant, then I remembered the chattering negro with the two women and had difficulty in suppressing a smile.

"It's a brotherhood peculiar to the Orient," I explained.

"Like the Elks at home?"

"No—quite different."

I had finished dressing and was ready to make my appearance on deck. For all my festive preparations for conquest, it seemed I was doomed to disappointment. I had seen the girl at luncheon; had vainly tried to get a look from her; had seen her climb the stairs to the after deck and slip, quietly, into a steamer chair. I had hoped she would stay there and had hurried to my cabin to make myself presentable. Now, the chair she had occupied was vacant and a search of the deck showed her nowhere in sight. Cheesebrood was there, however, and no sooner saw me than he rose and came toward us, lusting to finish another fifty years of the growth of the church. I grabbed Pete's arm and dragged him in the opposite direction.

"Did you ever hear of the Decretals of Constantine, Pete?"

"What are they?"

"I think there's money to be made in them."

"Who's got 'em?" he questioned.

"Kid Stupid."

"Leave him to me—they're the same as ours."

I loved the nonchalant way Pete turned back toward the missionary as Cheesebrood called:

"Oh, Mr. Phelps—if you're not engaged——"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Cheesebrood, but I'm very busy just at present."

I loved Pete's guileless expression as he said:

"Excuse me, mister—but the Duke was just tellin' me about some little old Decretals or sumpin' you had, an' he thought I'd be interested."

"That is an odd way of describing them, but I will be delighted to tell you of them," the missionary smiled affably.

"We'll hear about 'em first an' see 'em afterward, eh, Doc?" affirmed Pete. "'Course I ain't exactly no expert——"

As I saw Cheesebrood get the death-clutch on Pete's arm and make a preparatory gesture with the forefinger, I smiled happily and descended the stairs to the lower deck in search of my missing lady.

I found I was not the only one with an eye for beauty. The puffy little captain was strutting like a pouter pigeon up and down outside the dining saloon, combing his fingers through his black spade beard and glancing inside, out of the corner of his eye, every time he passed the door. I knew who was there, even before I looked. With an air of nonchalance, I walked past the Greek and into the dimly lighted cabin, disregarding the furious scowl he bent upon me. As I expected, the Syrian girl was inside, writing a letter. She glanced up as I came in, but immediately bent over her paper again. Now that I had found her, I had no idea how I was going about meeting her. I felt silly. For lack of a better excuse for staying, I called a steward and asked for a cup of tea.

"But, *monsieur*, *déjeuner* is finish'," the steward objected.

"On the doorstep of the cafe crouched a beggar who sent a murderous-looking dagger whizzing after us"

"Can't I have a cup of tea when I want it?" I asked.

"*Non, monsieur*, you cannot." It was the captain who spoke. He had come inside the saloon. "Zere are a regulair hours for tea. She will be 'eff-pess four."

"But, can't I *buy* a cup of tea now?"

"It iss impossibal. Ze steward are busy."

He wanted to get me out of that room and I was equally determined to stay. I didn't like the speculative glitter in his eye as he looked at the girl.

"I can buy a drink, can't I?"

THE steward exchanged a swift look of inquiry with the captain, who answered for him:

"Go oop on ze deck. I 'ave it sends to you."

I thought of a new tack.

"I think I will write a letter. May I have some paper?"

"Zere are no more of paper."

I was beginning to hate that little man.

"I suppose there are no more of pen, either?"

"*Non, monsieur*."

"Here is some paper—if you can find another pen," a soft voice spoke up behind me.

I looked gratefully at the girl, whose face was perfectly expressionless as she offered me a few sheets of her paper.

"That's very kind of you," I stammered. "I think I have a pencil in my cabin."

I dashed out and took the stairs, three at a time, to the upper deck. Far aft, still in the clutch of Cheesebrood, Pete was slumped down in a steamer chair in utter dejection. He had found that Decretals should be seen and not heard.

It took some little rummaging before I unearthed the stub of a pencil in Peter's knapsack. By the time I returned to the dining saloon, I found the captain bent over the top of the pivot chair in which the girl was sitting. He was talking rapidly in Arabic, with his back to me, but from the tenseness of his attitude and the sound of his voice, I knew he was making some kind of nasty proposition or threat. It made my blood boil.

Though I made no attempt to deaden my footsteps, I was within a few feet of him before he heard me and whisked around. If I had been uncertain before, the sight of his scarlet face and inflamed eyes would have told me what he was saying to the girl. He tried to speak English, but it was a hopeless jumble of unintelligible sounds. Finally, he began speaking in French.

"*Monsieur*, I must ask you to leave."

I shook my head.

"Oh, no."

"*Monsieur*," he spluttered, "you cannot use this room. It must be cleaned."

"If that is the case, mademoiselle cannot stay here, either."

He muttered a Greek curse under his breath, while stabbing me through and through with dagger-like glances. When he next spoke, his manner was frigidly polite.

"If I must explain, *monsieur*, something that should be plain to any one, you are not welcome here. I have a matter of business to take up with mademoiselle."

"Yes, I know what kind of business you refer to."

"It is the matter of her passage. She is without money. She has no ticket. She owes me one hundred and sixty drachma. She speaks of her father, but I do not know her father. She asks that I wait until we reach Kieff. Ah—that story has been told before. I cannot afford to carry passengers for nothing."

"You needn't trouble yourself about the money," I snapped.

"Ah-hah—yes, I need not trouble myself. In America, I have heard it rains down gold dollars from the sky. Every one is millionaire. That is why you say to me I need not trouble myself. You think we are all rich—but I am not American, *monsieur*."

"That is easy to guess. What I meant was, I will see that you are paid."

He scowled at me.

"You will pay it?"

I bowed.

"If mademoiselle will permit me?"

She had been sitting with hands covering her face. As I made the last remark, she lifted her eyes. She started to shake her head in refusal, but caught sight of the captain's face. What she saw there made her shudder. She had been crying and tears still fringed her thick lashes. She looked up at me with innocent appeal.

"Your companion has said you are going to Kieff?"

I nodded.

"It is my home. My father will gladly repay you the money and will kiss your hands if you would be so kind."

"Then that is settled," I said, turning to the captain, who was leering at me.

"You will pay?"

"I have said I would."

"I would like the money now, *monsieur*."

"Very well. How much did you say it was?"

"One hundred and sixty drachma."

I put my hand in my pocket and stopped. I could feel the blood mounting to my cheeks. It was only then that I realized that I had just one dollar, two Italian lire and a Canadian dime on my person. What was worse, that was every cent Peter and I had in the world.

CHAPTER III

I STEPPED out of our cabin and filled my lungs with the cool, crisp air of early morning. Above an ultramarine sea, a golden haze of thin sunshine filled the world. The deck was still damp from the scrubbing it had received. The *Scylla* was cutting the water at top speed, headed for the land, which showed as a low, lavender cloudbank dead ahead. A perfect morning in every respect but one. We were due to reach the port of Kieff by ten o'clock and in the intervening three hours, I had to find one hundred and sixty drachma—the price of my folly in offering to pay a young lady's passage.

I was ravenously hungry, for I had purposely missed dinner the night before in my efforts to dodge the captain. You see, by a generous amount of side, I had bluffed my way through the embarrassing moment of the previous afternoon. I had even convinced the obnoxious little officer that I had plenty of money in my cabin. I escorted my Syrian beauty—Miss Anis Bin Adham—to Cheesebrood, acquainted him with the situation and tried to borrow some money from him. I didn't mind his refusal so much as the manner in which he did it. He acted as if I were asking him to share in some carnal plot. In fact, he let me understand that unless I kept entirely away from the girl, he would not take the responsibility of protecting her.

"I take it rather as an imposition, at best," he had said, "and I must have it strictly understood that I take no part in your schemes."

It made me pretty mad, but since I had to dodge the captain I couldn't watch out for her, and a missionary seemed the best bet.

As I say, I was ravenously hungry and the knowledge that once off the *Scylla* we would be forced to live by our wits, made me determined to have breakfast, captain or no captain. I had risen at seven, because he usually

breakfasted about nine. Peter was still asleep and I saw no reason for waking him. We had sat late, trying to figure a plan, but Pete's one idea had been to pay the Greek in cigar coupons. I didn't believe it would work. He had seen too much American money. Still, if the worst came to the worst, it was a chance.

I walked to the top of the steps leading to the lower deck and craned my neck vainly in an effort to see into the dining cabin. Finally, I grasped my nerve in both hands and started down. The captain was standing in the door smoking a cigarette. I tried to dodge back, but it was too late. He had seen me. Assuming an air of casual boredom, I descended the rest of the way and walked up to him.

"Good morning, captain."

In a manner deliberately insulting, he said in French:

"There is a matter of one hundred sixty drachma you owe to me."

"Oh—oh, yes," I replied airily. "It completely slipped my mind, but don't worry——"

"Bah! You have said that before. Don't worry—don't worry—don't worry——"

"Now, look here"—I imitated my uncle's best manner in calling down an employee—"this won't do. It won't do at all. I'm not used to having my word doubted. You will receive your money—one hundred and sixty drachmas, or whatever it is—before I leave this boat. Do you understand?"

"*Parfaitement, monsieur!*" he hissed right in my face. "Unless you pay you will not be permitted to leave the boat." With that, he turned on his heel and strode, angrily, forward.

IF anything could have taken my appetite, that did. Instead of falling to, like a farmhand, I toyed with my food, with all the politeness of the groom at a wedding breakfast. I ate slowly, trying to fashion some sort of plan for satisfying the debt I had gratuitously assumed. One thing I was determined upon—the girl should get safely ashore. After that, I didn't care what happened.

A flabby, sallow Italian merchant sat down opposite me at the table, followed shortly by his dowdy, Semitic-looking wife. Somehow, I couldn't get it out of my head that I would be able to borrow the money from some one. It had always been possible in the past. The feeling of being without funds or friends was new to me. The Italian cocked a bilious-looking eye in my direction and I realized that I had been staring at him. Clearly, he offered no solution.

The only other cabin passengers were a portly German doctor and his wife and the Greek who was following Pete. Cheesebrood, I've already mentioned. While the German doctor was affable enough to the Latins, he was violently antagonistic to Cheesebrood, Pete and myself. He was an exile from his native land and they are always the greatest patriots. He, apparently, blamed England for getting Germany into the war and America for getting her out of it. Even if he had been friendly, I couldn't visualize myself asking him for money. There remained the Greek—but Pete had manhandled him and I doubted if he had one hundred and sixty drachma.

Convinced that no hope lay in the generosity of my fellow passengers, I left the table and walked forward, through the tangle of Arab families, to a place at the prow, where I could watch the land coming steadily closer. Already the lavender had changed to dull brown and I could see a splotch of white, that showed Kieff. Behind it, a mountain could be dimly discerned, traced against the blue background of the sky as airily as frost on a window.

I stood there for perhaps half an hour, trying to concentrate on my problem, with no success, when I became aware of a sailor lounging against the rail behind me. Something about the way he constantly kept me under observation out of the corner of his eye convinced me that he had been sent, purposely, to watch me. To test my conclusion, I strolled aft. Sure enough, when I glanced back he was following. The captain was taking no chances on my jumping overboard or escaping in the crowd when we reached port. I passed the dining saloon and mounted the stairs. When I reached the door of our cabin, I looked around again and saw my guard saunter to the rail and gaze over the side.

I ENTERED the cabin to find Peter dressing and perfectly furious.

"I was havin' me second beauty sleep when I hears a noise an' cocks me eye open just in time to catch that dirty little Wop pokin' his nose in that door agin."

I sat down on the bunk, as I suggested morosely:

"You'd better hurry down and get some breakfast. It's probably the last real meal we'll have for some time."

"Not before I finish wit' the Wop. I give him fair warnin' to keep away. I told him I'd kill him if he ever come in here agin, an' I'm a man of me word."

"For heaven's sake don't do anything more!" I said sulkily. "We're in enough trouble now."

"Whose fault is that?"

"Mine, if you like."

"All right, it's my turn to get into trouble an' I insist on havin' some of the fun."

He bent forward toward the blurred mirror and started to part his hair, but stopped in the middle of the operation.

"Say, what's eatin' you anyhow?"

I made no reply.

"You still worryin' about that dough-re-mi you owe the captain? What's the sense to that? Let him do the worryin'!"

"Look out that door, Pete! Isn't there a sailor standing about thirty feet away?"

Pete did as I told him.

"What of it?"

"He's there to watch me—to see that I don't leave the ship until the captain's paid."

"You can handle him all right. He ain't so big."

"I'm thinking about the girl. She won't be permitted to go ashore, either. Can you imagine what she is going to think of me—after I said I would pay her fare?"

"An' whatever made you act like such an idjit? I don't know why I put up wit' you. It's like bein' wet-nurse to a half-wit. First you turn down seven million berries, then you do a high dive into the ocean when you can't swim, an' now you pay a dame's fare you never seen, wit' money you ain't got."

I peevishly rose and started for the door, but Pete grabbed my arm.

"Now don't get high-hat again!"

As I made no reply, he looked up at me with that whimsical, Irish thoughtfulness, so hard to resist.

"Forgit about it, Duke, will yuh?"

"Forget about what?"

"About the jack you owe the captain. I'll get it."

"How?"

"Never mind. I said I'd get it, didn't I?"

He turned back to the mirror.

"Where do you think you can get any money on this boat?"

"Oh, for cat's sake," he stormed, "am I a baby that I have to tell you everything I do?"

"But——"

"Quit your buttin' an' get outa here. How can I comb me hair when me brains are active?"

I LEFT, having no great faith in his promise. He was too optimistic. I guessed that he would try to cash the cigar coupons, and, instinctively, I felt that if he tried it, he would be caught. The sailor left the rail as soon as he saw me and followed about thirty paces behind as I marched the deck. I rounded the poop and started up the other side of the ship when I caught sight of Miss Anis Bin Adham standing at the rail. She was alone, shielding her eyes from the sun as she gazed forward toward the land. I was undecided whether I ought to speak or not, after Cheesebrood's warning, but she solved the problem for me. I had just passed her when I heard her call, shyly:

"*Monsieur.*"

It was evidently a new experience for her to address a man for she blushed with confusion and half covered her face with her head-veil as I joined her at the rail.

"*Monsieur*, we approach Kieff."

Yes, we were approaching Kieff, all too rapidly. She spoke with the preciseness natural to one who has acquired a foreign language, but her pronunciation was faultless. Just to hear the liquid quality of her voice was a joy.

"There are many things I would wish to say before we reach there, but it is so difficult. I do not know your name; I do not know what your address will be at Kieff, and those things I must know, so that my father may return to you the money you were so generous to give."

I felt a cold perspiration break out on my body. I couldn't tell her the money hadn't been paid and yet I was ashamed to listen to her gratitude, so undeserved.

"My name is Phelps—Wallace Phelps."

She had some difficulty in repeating it after me.

"And you will visit friends, or will you stop at a hotel?"

One dollar, two lire and a Canadian dime.

"Er—we probably sha'n't go to a hotel, and yet—I think I'd better communicate with you after we get ashore. You see, we haven't decided yet just where we will stay."

A worried look came into her eyes.

"I fear that it will be impossible for you to communicate with me after we reach Kieff."

"You mean I'm never going to see you again? That hardly seems fair."

"You do not understand, Mister Phe-lps. In this country, it is not like America. I have gone to an American school and I know how happy American girls are—the freedom they enjoy——"

"Oh, I know it is different, but couldn't I write to you—or get some one to introduce us properly?"

She shook her head slowly.

"It is much better for us than before, but still we are permitted to do very little. At the school, we did not wear the yashmak to cover the face. Before the school closed, my classmates took an oath to refuse to wear it at our homes. I have gone without it on this boat—and have you seen? A Moslem hissed at me yesterday. They think terrible things of me. The captain thinks the same. If my father should see me talking to you, like this, he would punish me severely."

For a moment we looked at each other and in her wide, dark eyes I saw something that thrilled me with a strange dizziness. After a tense second of silence, she blushed and looked away.

I leaned my arms on the rail and studied the land ahead. Already, I could see the narrow entrance to the harbor of Kieff, between stone breakwaters. A freighter was just nosing her way out, a black plume of smoke rolling from her funnels and smudging out her wake with a gray pall. She slowly turned south, bound for Alexandria. A dozen fishing smacks dotted the water with their brown and red and yellow sails. The city itself was still indistinct, but a white lighthouse on a point of land stood out clearly.

"They have told me that you threw yourself into the sea to save my life," the girl beside me spoke hesitantly, not looking in my direction.

"Did they tell you what a miserable failure I made of it?" I said, with disgust.

"Perhaps—perhaps it would have been better if you had let me die."

"Why do you say that?"

"It is nothing. I should not have said it—only—the idea came to me when I was in the water with death so close. 'If I die I shall not have to marry,' was the thought that was with me. It was very wicked of me."

"Whom do you have to marry?" I questioned.

"A man I do not like. He is very evil—very cruel. I shall not have much happiness again."

Her words took the edge off my romantic ardor.

"Forgive me, that I speak of it to you. I should not, but you seem so—so friendly and——"

"And what?"

"So different from any one I have ever seen. I think I understand a word we do not have in our language. I know now what they mean when they speak of a gentleman." She fluttered a shy look in my direction, and added: "I am very wicked for speaking to you so."

"But if you dislike this man, why do you marry him?"

She became serious again.

"We were betrothed when we were very young. His father and my father are close friends."

"That is no reason why you should sacrifice yourself," I protested.

She smiled at my earnestness.

"In Syria, a girl must marry whomsoever her father wishes her to marry."

"In France, they have some such silly notion, but they couldn't force you to marry a man if you simply refused. I knew a girl in France——"

"Ah, yes—that was France. Listen! I will tell you of a girl who refused—she was my dearest friend. She loved some one—oh, very much. She would have gone to him gladly, if he had but beckoned. That is how she loved. We were both in the American girl's school. When she came to her father's house last year, she found that her father had betrothed her to an old man, rich, evil and diseased. She told her father she would not marry the old one."

Anis stopped speaking and gave a slight shudder.

"Her own father beat her with the whip that does not

mark, but hurts so terribly; then, with the help of her own brothers, tied her up and locked her in a room. When the old one came, they gave him the key to that room. After that, she was willing to marry him."

There was a pathetic droop to her shoulders as she finished.

"But you are nothing but a child," I objected.

"Oh, no!" Her eyes were wide with earnestness as she turned to me. "I am quite old. I shall be sixteen in the spring. Most of my friends were married much sooner than that. I would have been married last year had it not been that my father is very kind and permitted me to go back to the dear school for one more year."

A small hand, with delicately pointed fingers, peeped from beneath the abundant sleeves of her shapeless, black-silk dress. The thought of her marriage gave me a hurt feeling somewhere in my chest.

"And is this man, whom you are to marry, old and diseased, too?"

"No—it would be better for me if he were, for then I should not have long to live with him. He is young and he is handsome. There are many girls who call me fortunate in being betrothed to him. If I did not know how evil he can be, I could feel as they. *Monsieur*, I have seen him kick to death a little dog at which he was angry. I have seen him beat a servant with a stick until he was exhausted, because, by accident, the man brushed against him. I have seen him pull the wings from birds for pleasure. Can you think what he will do to a wife?"

I WAS stupefied with indignant resentment. Before I could say anything, she went on:

"Why do you think that I wear no veil? Because I hope that he will hear of it and consider me unfit to be his wife. Why did I dare talk with your friend or with you, when every law of my country and my religion forbids it? Because I hope to make him have only disgust for me, so that he will refuse to take me."

"Is that the only reason you spoke to me?" I asked.

She seemed frightened at my question. I was standing very close to her, looking down into her eyes. Suddenly we both jumped as there came a long blast from the ship's whistle. Afterward, we smiled foolishly at each other. I reached for her hand and she allowed it to linger a moment in mine before she withdrew it. As the din of the whistle died out, she said:

"I must go."

"Listen! I may be interfering in something that is none of my business, but you aren't going to marry this man your father has picked out for you. This *can't* be the end! I'm going to see you again in Kieff."

"Oh, do not try! Please do not try!" she whispered, with terror in her eyes.

"Don't you want me to interfere? Don't you want me ever to see you again?"

I reached for her hand and she pressed my fingers, but she shook her head and pleaded:

"Do not ask me that! It is impossible."

"Nothing is impossible."

"It cannot be. You must not try! You must not even ask of me, nor mention that you know me! People would not understand. They would say bad things of me. They would tell my father and he would kill me. That, I would not mind, but, you, too, he would kill. If there is any way——"

She looked over my shoulder and the color died out of her face. I whirled around to find the captain at my elbow.

"There is a matter of one hundred and sixty drachma, Monsieur——"

The words were addressed to me, but he kept his eyes on the girl, insulting her with the look he gave her.

"I said you would get your money as soon as we reach port."

"Yes. You have *said* much. If words were money, I would be millionaire—but you still owe me one hundred sixty drachma. Are you going to pay or not?"

"Of course I'm going to pay," I flung back at him.

A hot flood of shame ran through me as I saw the astonishment and dismay written on the face of Anis. A four-flusher is the most despicable creature living.

"When?"

"As soon as we get to port."

The Greek swelled like a poisoned toad.

"I do not believe you. I know the game you have played. You said you would pay in order to get the girl—*la petite poule*——"

"That will do!"

"You talk of money, but it is all talk. The wind of the air. *Sacré nom de Dieu!* You have spent nothing on the boat. You have no money. Even the steward tells me you have not given him a *pourboire*."

"Wait a minute!"

"Wait—for what? I will not wait! You do not leave the boat, understand, not you nor your friend nor *la petite marchandise* with you. *Canaille!*"

At that instant Peter strolled nonchalantly around the end of the cabin. At sight of him my heart jumped into my throat. If ever a man breathed a prayer, I did then. He cocked his cap over one ear as he took in the situation and walked up to the angry captain.

"Say—you got to cut out this racket! What's the argyment?"

"He wants the money I owe him, Pete." I swallowed. "Have—have you got it?"

"Sure I got it," he drawled. "How much d'yuh want?"

From his pocket he pulled out a great wad of dirty, torn Greek money.

"Wait—oh, wait, Pete—wait just a minute!"

I turned back to the captain.

"Before I pay you this money, I want you to appreciate just what I think of you. You have gratuitously insulted not only me and my friend, but the young lady who was with me. If I have any influence in Washington, and I think I have, your conduct shall be reported in full, and the resultant action will probably do much to disrupt the very friendly feeling that formerly existed between Greece and the United States. There are your one hundred and sixty drachma! I think you are an avaricious, detestable little swine—and don't let me hear a peep out of you!"

"Nor nothin' else!" Pete amended, threateningly.

WHEN the captain had left, I turned back to the girl, but she had disappeared.

"Where did Anis go?"

"Is that what I get for helpin' you out of a hole?" Pete burst out. "If that ain't gratitude!"

I threw my arm around him and hammered him on the back.

"You crazy Irishman—that's the second time you've saved my life. It was magnificent. Where on earth did you get it?"

"I said I'd get it, didn't I? Well, I'm a man of me word."

"Did you borrow it?"

"Sure I did. I've got more ways than you'd think of raisin' money."

He was somewhat mollified, so I came back to my first question.

"Did you see where Anis went?"

"You mean the Syrian dame?" His tone was harsh.

"I didn't say good-by to her."

He looked at me suspiciously.

"She seems to have said good-by to you. What's all the excitement about? You gettin' nuts again?"

"I'm mad about her—and you must help me do something, Pete. She's engaged to marry a man she hates. You have to help me break it up!"

"What for?"

"Because you must. It simply can't go on."

"You gonna marry her yourself?"

A PUGNACIOUS look was in his eye.

"Of course not—that's silly! I've only talked to her once. But it will be something to do that ought to be done. It will mean some excitement."

"Of course, now I got us some jack, you think all we got to do is get excited over some dame. What's the big idea?"

Pete was jealous. It showed in every word he uttered and in his peevish querulousness. I wanted to go hunt for Anis, but, under the circumstances, I didn't dare leave. The ship's engines had been stopped and we were drifting slowly into the harbor, past the stone breakwater. A blue-clad soldier stood at one end and watched us pass Arrived at our anchorage, a hundred small boats rowed alongside, filled with a shouting, gesticulating mob of boatmen, fruit sellers, porters and guides. They fought for a place near the companion ladder and every time one boat bumped into another, a combat seemed imminent, but it always spent itself in shrieked invective and violent gestures. The quay was lined with the usual cafés and warehouses. A French gunboat, belonging to the mandatory commission, was anchored alongside. We could see some sailors at work on her decks. A narrow-gauge train moved slowly through the crowd along the water front, with a man standing on the front of the engine, blowing a cow horn to warn people off the track. We stood there several minutes, taking in the scene, before I thought of a way of leaving Pete without arousing his suspicions.

"I'll go get our knapsacks," I suggested.

"I brought 'em wit' me. They're over there!"

"But I hadn't packed."

"I did it for you."

"Are you sure you didn't leave anything?"

"You talk like the sign on a hotel door."

"I'd better go back and see."

"You'll stay here!" he insisted. "There's no sense in your goin' back. I tell you I got all of it."

As he saw the rush of guides and boatmen up the companion ladder, he muttered:

"Here come the Wops! Get your stuff—quick, before they get aholt of it!"

He ran ahead, picked up his knapsack and dashed around the poop. I was slower in getting my musette bag over my head and I wanted, desperately, to have a last word with Anis before she left the boat. Before I could make up my mind which way to go, I was surrounded and hauled this way and that by a dozen Arabs, each shouting, in bad English, the superlative merits of some hotel and trying to capture me from the others.

By the time I had struggled free and made them understand I wasn't going to a hotel and didn't need a guide, I decided to join Pete. I went to the side, where the boats were congregated, to look for him and saw Anis handed into a boat by a sallow-skinned, vulture-faced man with long mustaches. At first, I thought he might be her father, but when I saw the scant respect she paid him, I knew he must be a servant—probably major-domo of her father's house. He tried to make her cover her face, but she rebelled and tossed into the sea the veil he draped over her head.

As the boat moved out of the tangle of other boats, she looked back at the ship, saw me standing at the rail and waved her hand. Her guardian followed her gesture with his jaundiced eyes, and, when he saw my answering wave, broke into a torrent of abuse. The evil looks he shot at me were venomous with hatred. He was quivering with rage. He shook a bony fist at me and spat into the sea in my direction. He was still squealing at her when they cleared the other boats and pulled for shore.

I walked around to our cabin, just to make sure nothing had been left. When I tried the handle, I found it unlocked, but the door stuck as if there was something propped against it. I looked through the port, but could see nothing. Putting my shoulder to the door and giving it a healthy shove, I finally opened it wide enough to admit my body. When I stepped inside and saw what was on the floor, I hastily closed the door and locked it.

At first, I thought the man was dead. His arms were bound behind him. His face was covered with a handkerchief, one of mine. Another handkerchief was stuffed into his mouth as a gag.

I uncovered the man's face and looked into the glaring, bilious eyes of the little Greek who had been following us. He started to struggle with his bonds and made peculiar, choking noises in his throat as I bent over him. His face was deep vermilion from his efforts. For a moment I had the insane notion to untie him, then it suddenly flashed through my mind where Pete had gotten the money to pay the captain.

If I let him up, he would make an outcry, demand the money I had paid the captain and our arrest. Under the circumstances, there seemed to be only one thing to do. I shoved the gag a little further into his mouth, saw that the knot was tight that bound his arms, covered his face with the handkerchief, slipped into his pocket all that was left of the money Pete had taken from him, then stepped out the door, locked it and tossed the key into the sea. After looking around to see that I had been unobserved, I grabbed my musette bag and hurried as fast as my legs would carry me, to find Peter and get off that boat.

CHAPTER IV

"THE first thing we do is visit the neighborin' dispensary acrost the street an' get a drink," said Pete, as I paid the boatman one of our two lire and we stepped ashore.

"The first thing we do is to get out of town."

"What's your hurry? We ain't even seen the place yet."

"You know that as soon as they find that Greek tied up in our cabin they will start the police hunting for us."

"You seen him, did you?" Pete grinned. "I didn't want you to go to the room 'cause I knew it'd bother you. You don't need to worry about that goofus, Duke."

His refusal to be serious, his blasé dismissal of the criminal action we had committed, irritated me.

"It's all right for you to say 'Don't worry!' but the fact remains that we're liable to be arrested any minute."

"Not any minute—not for at least an hour. There'll be plenty of time to get outa this burg when the captain comes ashore. So we'll go over now an' have a little drink. It's the land of the camel, but that ain't no reason to imitate one."

Knowing how Peter stood on the drink question, I gave in and followed him across the street to a dark hole labeled "America Bar."

WE sat down at an iron table just inside the door and I gloomily stared at the motley throng that passed while Peter guzzled a bottle of beer. He drank a full quart without ever removing the bottle from his lips. As he set it down, he gave a satisfied sigh and asked:

"Ain't you havin' none?"

"No, thank you."

"All right, then I'll have another, just so's the owner of the place won't think we're stingy."

As he whistled the ragged urchin, who waited on us, to the table, I asked:

"How much does a bottle of beer cost, Pete?"

"Nothin' at all, you might say, compared to the worth of 'em."

He drank the second bottle with the same gusto as the first, but more slowly.

"I have an idea we ain't gonna leave this place till way late this afternoon," he mused, settling back in his chair. "Tell me what the little Turkish girl said to you, an' then gimme the dope on this marriage we're gonna crab!"

"That will have to wait," I replied. "We are going to get out of town just as soon as you finish that drink."

"What's the big idea? There's lots of things 'bout this dump I like. I'm gonna have just one more bottle o'beer an' then fall to serious drinkin'."

"No you won't," I answered coldly. "We haven't any money."

"Don't gimme that stuff again. I give you plenty."

"And I gave it back to the Greek you stole it from."

For a moment he stupidly looked at me. A frown gathered on his brow. He blinked once or twice as comprehension dawned on him, then his anger kindled until his face was flaming red and his eyes were like blue steel buttons. When he spoke, it was very quietly, but in a voice that shook.

"You did?"

Suddenly he slammed his fist so hard on the table that both bottles crashed to the floor.

"Oh, you confounded simp, you—you—you brainless idjit! I ain't goin' to stand it any longer. I don't know why I started wit' you in the first place an' I don't know why I'm wit' you now. Every time I leave you outa me sight you go cuckoo."

"But, look here, Pete, the money wasn't ours."

"Tell that to the Y. M. C. A.! It wasn't yours, but there never was no money made that was more mine until you tossed it to the fairies."

"You stole it."

"I borreyed it. I ast him could I have it an' he never said a word."

"You asked him after the gag was in his mouth."

"What if I did? The money was mine. It was only fair pay for all the snoopin' he done."

We were both glaring at each other as we shouted our denunciations. The ragged waiter hovered anxiously around the table, trying to shoo us into the street before we came to blows.

"I suppose you let little Nemo loose after givin' him back his dough," growled Pete.

"No, I didn't. If you must know, I fixed his gag tighter, locked the door and threw the key into the sea."

He regarded me with a smoldering eye, but his anger abated perceptibly.

"It's brainstorms you get. That proves you ain't loony all the time Have we got *any* jack?"

"One dollar and one Canadian dime."

"Just enough for two whiskies apiece, wit' a dime left over for the waiter—or would you rather go out an' buy birdseed to feed the Wooflesnipes?"

I was in no mood for joking.

"We'd better save this for some food—or I'll save my share of it. You can have your whisky if you want it."

Peter rose and settled his cap over one ear.

"Then there'll be no whisky, if you ain't gonna have none. But I hate you for deprivin' me of what I been lookin' forward to this many a day."

He sauntered to the door, while I remained seated. I am not overly sensitive, but his words hurt like the mischief. I tried to justify my conduct in my own eyes. On second thought, it did seem ridiculous to have given that money back to the Greek, since we were criminally liable, anyway, and we might as well be hanged for sheep as goats. There was something in the knowledge that money was stolen that made me give it back.

Strange that I should shrink so from the idea of theft and yet be quite willing to assist in what amounted to an assault on an innocent man. I had had the idea that if I gave him back part of his money, he might not be so liable to have us arrested. If I was going to be a continued burden on O'Gaffney, it might be better for us to part company.

Pete suddenly dodged back from the doorway and grabbed my arm.

"The Wop an' the captain—just comin' ashore. Get outa the light so they can't see you."

I retreated with him to a table in a dimly lighted corner of the grog-shop.

"If they come in here, sit still!" he muttered. "Maybe they won't see us."

"And if they do?"

"We may have to fight. The way I'm feelin' now, I'd like nothin' better."

"Look here, Pete," I said, leaning across the table. "Everything I do seems to displease you. I don't want to be a drag on you. Perhaps it would be better if we split."

PETE'S eyes narrowed. He looked at me with hard speculation.

"So that's it, is it? What'll you do?"

"I don't know. That doesn't enter into it. Get back to the States as best I can, I suppose."

"You ain't satisfied wit' me comp'ny?"

"You know that's not true," I objected.

"Oh, I know I ain't a gent'man. Now you're crazy about this Turkish skirt, you'll prob'ly be meetin' up wit' some swell people an' won't want to have me around." There was hurt in his voice and disgust in the look he gave me. "I never seen it fail. Let a guy go nuts about a frail an' it's curtains for his best pals."

"Don't be foolish!" I burst out.

"I ain't foolish," he sighed, leaning back in his chair. "Have it your own way, if you like. You go your way an' I'll go mine."

"That's not my way. I only suggested it because I seem to do the wrong thing all the time."

"That ain't the reason," he glumly answered.

We sat a few moments in silence, Pete idly kicking the table with his foot. A wall of misunderstanding seemed to have grown up between us. Both of us felt hurt, and for no particular reason.

"Have a drink," I suggested.

"Thanks, I ain't drinkin'."

I wished the captain and the Greek passenger would put in an appearance to break up our senseless misunderstanding.

"Let's get out of here," I said, as I rose from the table.

"Do we break now or later?" Pete queried, still seated.

"We're not going to break at all, Pete—not now or any other time. I'm sorry for what's happened, but if you ever suggest again that I'm trying to get rid of you because I'm ashamed of your company, I'll knock you loose from your eyeteeth. Do you understand?" I demanded hotly.

A smile of relief that was half belligerent came to Pete's lips.

"I'd like to see you try it—just once—when I'm feelin' like I done a minute ago. I guess we was both wrong. Maybe them brainstorms of yours are catchin' or somethin'."

HE rose from his chair and walked toward the door, while I paid the bill.

"Them two must have gone uptown by this time," he said, as I joined him. "That'd be in that direction, so we better go this other way."

We sauntered down the street in silence, for it takes some time to get over a break of that kind, no matter what is done to patch it up. We both felt that our relations were not quite the same as before. We had each uncovered thoughts that had been hidden. We each had seen a side of the other that was utterly strange. A misunderstanding between friends is more serious than fisticuffs between strangers.

"What about findin' out where that Turkish girl lives?" Pete suggested. I thought he was doing it for my sake, and vetoed the idea.

"She warned me not to try to see her, Pete. I think we ought to get out of town until the boat leaves."

"Don't forget she owes us the jack for her passage! No use turnin' that down."

"We can't go up to her house and ask her for it."

"Why not? She told me her dad would want to pay it back. Besides, how you gonna go about bustin' up this marriage if you don't know where she lives?"

For fear of starting our quarrel all over again, I pretended to fall in with his suggestion.

"Ast one of these Spicks!"

"They wouldn't understand me," I replied. "Wait till we see some Frenchman."

Pete had touched the Orient before, but it was all utterly new to me. We passed ornate coffee-houses, where bearded Arabs sat in solemn thought over domino games, placidly puffing their water pipes. Often, we were compelled to hug the wall to keep from being trampled under foot by a train of scornful-eyed camels. A lemonade vender stood at the intersection of busy streets and jangled an accompaniment of brass cups to his nasal chanting. Ramshackle, iron-tired carriages rattled over the cobbles, drawn by mangy horses, long since ready for the scrap heap. Dogs lay about in the sun and in everybody's way.

Desert men passed, their faces partly hidden with a sun veil, their legs tightly bound with cords to ward off cramps. Some of these had a Mongolian cast to their features—descendants of the fierce hordes of Genghis Khan. A Turkish boy scurried by with bright-red hair, freckles and Irish face. Unquestionably, his family tree would show some Irish follower of Cœur de Lion mixed somewhere in the roots. A religious lunatic, scrofulous and half blind, danced about in a circle of wide-eyed, overawed children. Women—shapeless bundles of black cloth, with heavy veils over their faces—shuffled by in too large slippers.

We walked into a street of rug sellers and turned from there into a street of silversmiths, where were displayed various parts of the human anatomy done in metal—hearts, lungs, hands, feet. It is a belief of the Near East that an ailing part will cure itself if you hang a silver replica of it before your patron saint. Two Greek-Orthodox priests went by, their long hair done up in a coil at the back of their necks and wearing box-like hats, draped with a veil.

At the turning of a corner, a man bumped into Pete. He stopped to apologize and I had difficulty in not laughing in his face, for he was the strangest individual I have ever laid eyes upon. At first glance, he seemed well dressed. It was only when you gave his costume a careful scrutiny that you could grasp the astonishing variety of odds and ends that went to make up the harmonious whole. He was as tall as I; smooth-faced, with a blue look around the jowls and a jaunty monocle stuck in a watery, red-rimmed eye. On his head was a battered sun helmet that must have been picked off some ash heap. The wing collar, fastened to a khaki shirt by a large pearl button, was of celluloid and so old that the tabs were in danger of falling off. The tie was a spotted rag of baby blue. He wore a linen coat of Prince Albert model, reaching to the knees, a pair of whipcord army breeches, liberally spotted with grease, spiral puttees that were not mates and a pair of grimy and very disreputable white canvas shoes.

"What—ho, little—ho!" he said cheerily, as he readjusted his monocle. "By Jove, well met! I rather think we've met before, haven't we?"

"Never, or I'd have remembered it," Pete grinned back at him, as we started to pass on.

"Hold on! Just a moment! I can't be mistaken."

"What d'you think of him, Duke?" Pete whispered, as we paused.

"Talk to him! He may be able to tell us where the girl lives."

"STAY just as you are while I think! I'll have the name in a minute. Was it—— No, that was the Australian chappie."

"My name's O'Gaffney," said Pete, going back to him.

"Of course—of course. What a stupid ass I am! And we met in—— Let's see—was it Paris or Cairo?"

"I've been both places."

"Paris—Paris—Cairo—— Remember faces, but not places—faces—places—not bad, wot? Must tell that wheeze to Jemmie. Let's see! I have it." His face brightened. I saw him looking at Pete's knapsack. "It was when you were in the army."

"You couldn't have met me when I wasn't."

Peter's skepticism did nothing to discourage the stranger.

"It must have been Cairo. Street of the Nations. You recall it now, don't you?"

"I remember the street well enough. It's a good one to keep off of."

The Englishman laughed and polished his monocle

with a very dingy rag he pulled from his pocket in lieu of a handkerchief.

"Jolly good, that. The same old—er—O'Gedney. You weren't artillery——"

"I was top-kick of the best troop of cavalry in the world—the Gallopin' 'I'."

"Quite. I remember perfectly. I was cavalry myself—the Grays—some years ago. Wounded at Ladysmith—done—ruined great future."

He fixed me with his eye as I joined them, gave his name as Bruce — Anstruther Harcourt Bruce — and casually mentioned that he was a younger son of the Duke of Lomond.

"Cashiered out of the dear old family by a jealous brother—frightful mess. Livin' on a remittance—due any day. By the by," he finished, "have you lunched?"

So that was it. I had an inkling of his game, at once. I had been suspicious of him from the first. Real Englishmen, particularly duke's sons, do not pal up to strangers, nor do they discuss their family affairs.

"Not since yestiddy," answered Pete.

Just when I was certain I had discovered the reason for our tattered liar's friendliness, he disrupted my idea by pulling several gold coins from his pocket.

"Then won't you be my guests?" he beamed. "I dare say I have enough here to do the honors. It's top-hole conversin' once more in the dear old mother tongue. I know a rippin' little place, close by, where you can get the best curry this side of Bombay. That, and a bottle of the best—eh, wot say?"

HAD I intended to refuse, it would have been useless, for at the mention of a bottle, Pete put his arm through Bruce's and answered:

"Brother, you said a mouthful."

There seemed to be nothing to lose and everything to gain in accepting his offer. With only a half-dozen Turkish coins in my pocket, the change from my last dollar, there was certainly nothing he could get from us. Although I was still suspicious of him, I was attracted to him. He seemed so utterly unconcerned at the ridiculous figure he cut. Had he been dressed in silk hat and cutaway for a stroll down Piccadilly, he couldn't have displayed any more satisfied self-assurance. He was one of the rulers of the earth and we were his guests. The rest were scum.

He led us back the way we had come to a small restaurant with a balcony overlooking the sea. There were few people in the place, for it was early, and they only paid attention to their food. Bruce ordered for all and his taste was excellent. When I saw him scan the wine card and the menu, I found it much easier to believe the story of the Duke of Lomond. There was no question but that, at one time in his life, the man had lived like a gentleman.

He left us together for a moment and Pete, who had been entirely fascinated by the Britisher's manner of speech, leaned over to me and said:

"He ain't real, is he, Duke?"

"I haven't discovered that for myself, yet, Peter," I told him.

When Bruce came back, he stopped to brush some dust off his coat with a napkin. He saw my scrutiny of his clothes and evidently felt that an explanation was due us.

"I dare say I look rather a ragbag. Queer sort of jam, mine—clothes stolen by a beastly valet to me—Arab beggar. Stripped me clean—no money—remittance delayed—due any day. No friends. Family pride, and all that rot. Fitted myself out as best I could."

"I think you've done remarkably well," I said.

He shrugged his shoulders inside his coat and inspected himself with a critical frown.

"They have an air, I think. Clothes don't matter—man's the thing. Tell a gentleman wherever you see one."

Chapter V

THE curry was everything he had claimed for it. After the many days of ship's fare, it was a most welcome change. We all ate with splendid appetite, but Peter outstripped us all. When the first edge had been taken off our hunger, I turned to Bruce:

"May I ask how long you have been in Kieff, Mr. Bruce?"

He filled his glass before replying. I saw him dart a questioning look at me from the corner of his eye.

"Oh, quite a time—er—forgotten just how long."

"My reason for asking was that we met a very nice girl on the boat and we're quite anxious to find out where she lives."

"Yeah—she owes us some jack," Pete put in, bolting another forkful of rice.

"What is her name?" questioned Bruce.

"Miss Anis Bin Adham."

"That's the Turkish of it," Pete insisted. "She give me her right name the first time I met her—Eunice Adams is what they'd call it in English."

"Bin Adham?" our host mused. "I know the name. I have it—it must be the little girl who is to marry the vali's son, Shevket——"

"The vali's son?" questioned Pete. "Any relation to the Lily of the Valley?"

His poor joke was a mile over the Englishman's head.

"Son of the jolly old governor of the province—big doin's last year when they announced the betrothal. I say, how did you happen to meet the girl? Her family is one of the richest in the city."

"The girl was dumped out of a rowboat an' the Duke rescues her," Pete explained. "Afterward, she can't pay her fare, havin' dropped her pocketbook in the ocean, so we paid it for her."

"Hi—ho! Romantic, wot?"

"You ain't heard nothin' yet! The duke over there chins things over wit' her, an' they falls for each other—so when the time comes we got to figure a plan to put the skids on this marriage she's contemplatin'."

"She doesn't want to marry this Shevket—or whatever his name is—she told me so," I added.

"She talked to you, you say? Oh, my word, you *are* in for it!"

"What's wrong wit' chinnin' wit' a pretty girl?" Pete demanded.

"Shevket won't like it a bit—and he can be rather nasty. It's not done, my boy. Not in these parts. By the by, how do you know she was pretty?"

"How do I know it? I got eyes, ain't I?"

"But—you mean you talked to her and she wasn't veiled?"

"Why should she be," Pete asked wrathfully, "wit' a face like that? She ain't got nothin' to hide."

"I SAY, you have gotten your feet into it, as the sayin' is. I warn you, frankly, if her pater or her fiancé find out about your meetin' up with her, they are quite capable of stickin' a knife in your silly ribs—particularly if they think there has been a love affair. Do you think the girl can be trusted to keep quiet about it?"

"Her father knows about it already," I answered, and told him of the nasty looks the vulture-faced servant had favored me with.

"That's awkward—deuced awkward. I wouldn't be too awfully keen about collectin' that money. I rather think I would jolly well let the money go hang. Was it much?"

"I wasn't thinking of the money," I replied.

"He never does," Pete added.

Bruce perked up and leaned across the table.

"I say—would you be interested in a lead mine?"

"All depends on the com'ny you're wit'," Pete mumbled, his mouth full of food and using his fork as a pointer. "I went through a coal mine onct, wit' a school teacher, an'—oh, baby——"

"Quite so, quite so," Bruce interrupted, then turned back to me. "What I mean to say—I went walkin' with a friend, minin' engineer thingumbob—in the mountains and he suddenly stops, looks up, points. Ledge—solid lead."

He put both hands on the table and leaned back in triumph, beaming upon me.

"Millions right there. Dig it out in chunks. No trouble with the government. English mission all friends. Lord Wilburforce, first cousin; General Twytham, related by marriage—do you follow?"

"Not very closely," I smiled. "You see, we have no money to invest in lead mines or anything else."

I felt Peter kick me under the table.

"DON'T listen to him, Doc!" he said to Bruce. "His uncle's one of the richest——"

"There's no use mentioning my uncle, Peter," I broke in. "My uncle wouldn't give a dollar if he knew I was starving to death. No, Mr. Bruce, there's no use talking to us. We are absolutely broke."

"That *is* unfortunate, isn't it?" the Englishman said commiseratingly. "My word, I know what it means. Still, you have the money to travel with, of course. This lead thing wouldn't take more than a few hundred pounds, and there you are—millions—absolute."

"If it took a few hundred cents, we couldn't invest," I replied. "We may have enough to get a bed tonight, and we may have to bunk under the stars."

"Well, there you are," smiled Bruce. "No harm mentionin' it. Wish I could help you out and all that sort of thing, but haven't more than just enough to get along—remittance comes. Glad to let you have plenty—due any day."

He sat back thoughtfully in his chair and polished his monocle on his napkin. Suddenly he beamed as he fixed it back in his eye.

"By Jove—just the thing. Friend of mine lookin' for an American—wanted to learn a game. Perhaps you know it—crab—no, not that——"

"Craps!" Pete shouted, coming to life.

"Craps, that's it. Wanted to know how it was played. Jolly good fun, he said—top-hole. Generous chappie—pay you well. What say? Would you mind teachin' him, and all that rot?"

"Would I mind?" drawled Pete.

"You wait here! I'll settle for this and toddle across the street to his diggin's, wot? Back in a jiff. Toodle-oo."

To Pete, the sun had risen. Craps was to him what electricity is to Steinmetz. He didn't invent it, but he was its master. Give him a pair of dice, elbow room and no ladies present and he would make a Memphis negro change color with envy.

"Don't wake me up!" he murmured. "Did you hear him say the guy was goin' to pay me for teachin' him? Truer word was never spoke. There must be a God in heaven after all, Duke. I don't know how much of this burg this guy owns, but it's the same as ours. I'll start on him easy—see? One or two passes, so's I have some jack, n'en I lose the bones. He's bound to win a little. Maybe he'll have a run of luck. We'll keep the bets small. It gets 'em just as wild as the big ones when they're first learnin'. Then I'll break him in easy stages. Coupla passes—crap once an' double up. Zowie! Comes a seven. Out he goes for some more dough. I know the birds. I let him win coupla passes, then, next time I get the bones, I got him hooked. After I've made him see how it's did an' I got all his jack, I'll teach him a few tricks, so's he can get his coin back off the other goofuses around here."

We waited. At the end of half an hour Pete was a lot quieter. I wasn't worried. I had seen Bruce stop to talk to the proprietor—a wizened little Turk. I had seen money change hands. I had seen the proprietor bow Bruce out the door and look over at our table with what was meant to be a pleasant smile. Everything looked all right, but it seemed strange that Bruce didn't come back.

"Prob'ly the guy was out an' he's tryin' to locate him," Pete reassured me.

"Probably," I nodded.

Another fifteen-minutes' wait, while Pete whistled softly off-key and idly drummed on the table. I motioned to the proprietor to come over. He shuffled across the tile floor, his baggy trousers flapping about his bare shins. When I addressed him in English, he called a boy who had waited on us to come and translate.

"Did Mr. Bruce say when he would be back?"

It took some time for the boy to understand whom I meant by Bruce. He jabbered staccato Arabic to the old man.

"The English Howajah said you give money for him."

The legs of Pete's chair slammed to the floor. It took him a moment to grasp the evil news, then he half rose from his place.

"Wait a minute, Pete!" I cautioned him. To the waiter, I said: "The gentleman who left said that we would pay for this—this food, is that right?"

"*Nam*," the waiter nodded.

"But I distinctly saw him pay for this meal—do you understand? I saw him give money to the old man."

Again the boy addressed the old man. That worthy answered something and smiled, showing his toothless, yellow gums.

"He pay for others," the boy answered.

"What others—we were the only ones with him."

"Other food—yesterday—before yesterday."

"I see. Mr. Bruce came here yesterday and ordered food which he paid for to-day."

"His name Smith."

"Oh," I smiled. "It was Mr. Smith who dined with us. Oh, yes—I remember now. He did mention his name was Smith." I tried to think, but my brain was dizzy. "Did Mr. Bru—did Mr. Smith mention that we expected to charge this?"

THE boy didn't understand what "charge" meant. At my first words of explanation, I saw from the boy's face that if I kept on I would not only never get any credit, but would also arouse the old man's suspicions.

"That will do," I said weakly. "We will be leaving presently."

When they had left us to ourselves, we faced each other in morose silence.

"Aloysius, would you be interested in a lead mine?"

"Aw, shut up!" he flung at me.

"Charming fellow, Mr. Bruce-Smith. Such excellent taste in food and wines. I think he said he met you in Cairo on the Street of Nations."

"An' you heard me tell him it was a good street to keep off of. I ain't changed my opinion."

For the next few moments we were buried in thought.

"Well, we have eat," Pete sighed.

"Yes. Our only problem is to get past that door in safety."

He dug into one pocket after another in a fruitless, half-hearted search for money. Among other things, he fished out the tattered tobacco sack, quite empty of tobacco.

"I ain't even got a smoke," he grunted.

SUDDENLY he stopped and pulled off his cap, which he had worn all through lunch. From the inner lining, he produced a small bundle of green and yellow cigar coupons, fastened with a rubber band. Pete rolled his eyes in thought, looked over at the proprietor who was writing something in a book, then at me.

"I wonder."

He snapped his fingers to the boy, untwining the rubber band.

"Gimme what change you got, Duke!"

When the waiter came, Pete seriously pulled the tobacco coupons and my change from his pocket.

"I'm payin' for the dinner, see?"

He messed about the money in his hand, then looked up at the waiter.

"How come you speak such good English?"

"Me speak good English," the boy repeated.

"That's what I said. Do you read it, now?"

"No. Me speak English—no can read."

"Well, I tell you," Pete said slowly, "you'd ought to learn to read English. It'd be a good thing for you to know. Here——"

He handed him a green cigar coupon.

"There's a dollar to help you get a eddication."

The boy smiled gratefully and bowed low. Pete handed him another green bill.

"Now, go get me some cigarettes!"

There was a great argument when the boy presented the cigar coupon to the old man. Pete watched it out of the corner of his eye, but pretended to be paying no attention to them.

"Hold on to everything you got," he urged under his breath.

Both the boy and the old man came back to the table.

"He say never seen American money like this one."

Peter looked over at me angrily

"Can you beat it, Duke? Ain't these people the ignorantest you ever seen?" He sat up straight and glared at the boy. "You mean you ain't seen any of that kind of money? Why, you must be crazy. That's war money the gov'ment give the soldiers. Each one of them's worth a dollar. Lookut! See that red 'one' marked on it? That means one dollar. If you ain't goin' to take good money, give it back to me!"

The boy watched Pete doubtfully and the old man watched the boy.

"Gimme that dollar I give you for your eddication!" Pete demanded, holding out his hand.

There was no question that Peter's generosity had put the boy on our side. He didn't want to give his coupon back. Therefore he turned on the old man and harangued him violently. The old man remained unconvinced, fingering the green paper suspiciously. Pete rose from his chair and started to grab it out of his hand.

"Come on! Give it here!"

His unexpected demand did the trick. The avaricious old boy could not stand to see anything resembling money pass out of his hand. He held it away from O'Gaffney and squealed something to the servant.

"He take—he take," the boy answered, "but you pay now for what you eating."

"How much is it?" growled Peter, seating himself again.

Another excited confab between the two. From their heated bickering you would have thought it was a personal disagreement between them. They finally came to a verdict.

"One hundred eighty-seven, Howajah."

"One hundred an' eighty-seven what?"

"Piasters."

"Holy cat!" breathed Pete. "One hundred an' eighty-seven piwhatels for just the little stuff we had. It's robbery. I ain't goin' to pay it. What are you givin' me for these dollars?"

More conversation.

"He give fifteen piasters, ten paras."

"For each one?"

"*Nam.*"

"Oh, well—that's differ'nt. I know you're doin' me outa me shirt, but I ain't in a position to argue wit' you. This time I'll let it go."

He gravely counted out the tobacco coupons into the old man's hand.

He had a few cigar coupons remaining. These he handed to the boy.

"There y'are, kid! You better take those. It's just to show you I like you. Mind what I say, you go to school an' learn to read. It'd be a good thing."

The boy tried to kiss his hand, but Peter drew it away roughly.

"None o' that stuff or I'll give you a punch in the jaw."

Have you ever had a dream where you wanted to run and couldn't? I went through much the same agony, as we were gravely followed to the door by that toothless old heathen, muttering Arabic blessings, and the beaming boy. I thought we would never get rid of them. Outside, on the doorstep of the café crouched a scabby, dust-covered beggar who held up his hands piteously as we passed and whined for money. As soon as the proprietor and the boy had gone back inside, I ran twenty feet just to get rid of my excitement. Peter was almost up to me when he stopped abruptly.

"What t'hell was that?"

"What?"

"Felt like sumpin' hit me in the back."

HE turned to look behind him and I saw something sticking in his knapsack. I pulled it out and found myself holding a short, murderous-looking dagger with a blade six inches long. The beggar who had been seated at the door of the café was running far down the street.

"This is what hit you, Pete."

He whirled around and looked at the knife.

"Judas!"

"It was buried clear up to the hilt in your knapsack."

"Somebody was tryin' to play a joke on me, I bet," he said unsmilingly.

"It was meant for me, Pete."

"What you done?"

"You remember what Bruce said? He said that if Anis' father or future husband find out I talked to her they'd stick a knife into me. I think this is a declaration of war."

Pete turned the knife over in his hands.

"Duke, I don't like this town much. You was sayin' sumpin' this mornin' about gettin' out of it. Suppose we do."

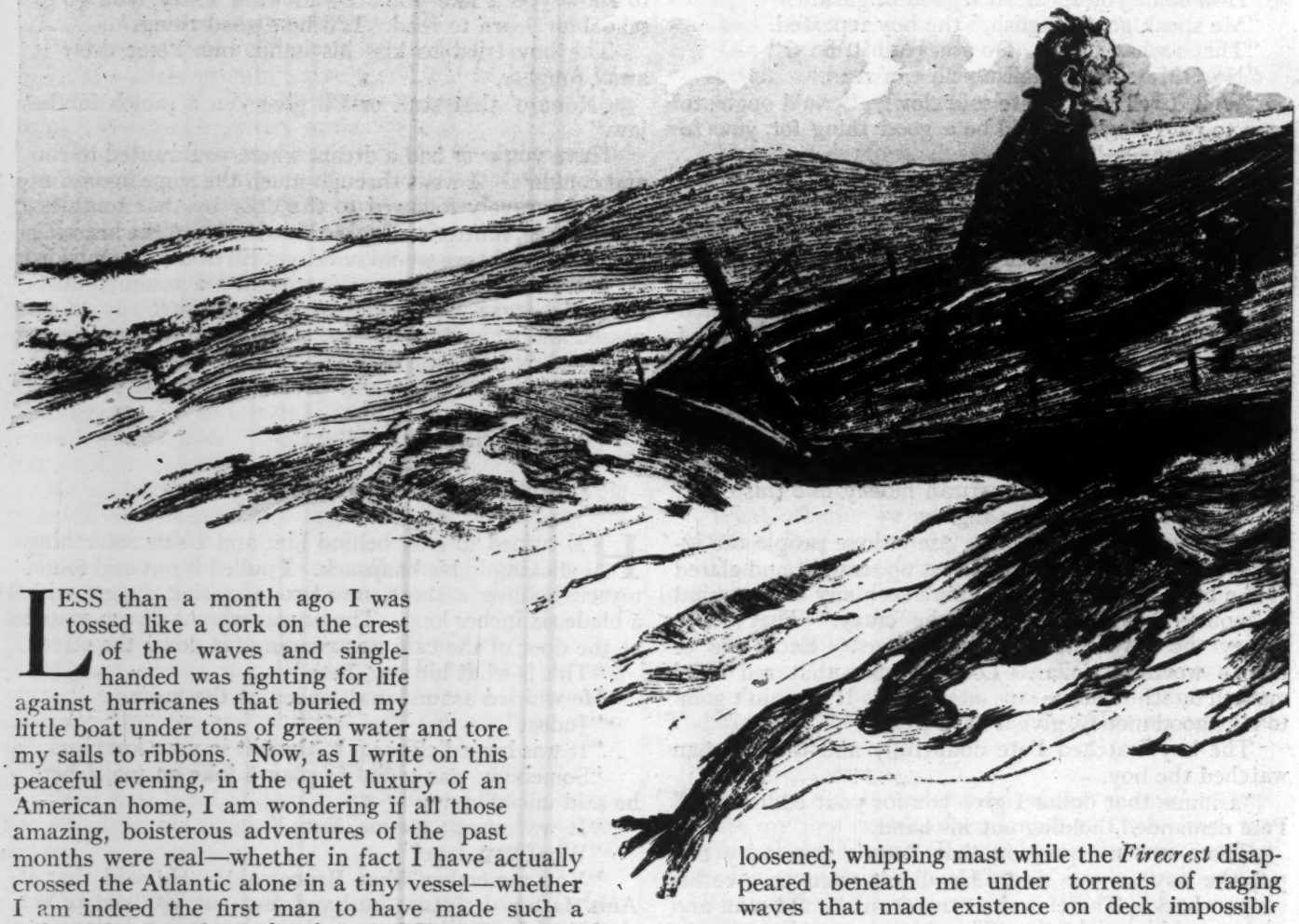
"With two Greeks, two Syrians and a couple of Turkish families on the [*Continued on page* 116]

The Greatest One-Man Adventure Since the War

How I Sailed Across the Atlantic Alone

A Hundred Thrilling, Solitary Days at Sea Beating My Way from France to America in a Tiny Boat Through Furious Tempests and Feverish Calms

Captain Alain Gerbault and Suzanne Lenglen at a tournament in Southern France shortly before the Captain set sail



LESS than a month ago I was tossed like a cork on the crest of the waves and single-handed was fighting for life against hurricanes that buried my little boat under tons of green water and tore my sails to ribbons. Now, as I write on this peaceful evening, in the quiet luxury of an American home, I am wondering if all those amazing, boisterous adventures of the past months were real—whether in fact I have actually crossed the Atlantic alone in a tiny vessel—whether I am indeed the first man to have made such a solitary journey from the shores of France to America.

Then my eyes fall on my log book, its pages still stained by salt water, and I realize that it was not all a dream. Visions of feverish, soul-trying labors aboard the 30-foot *Firecrest* cross my mind—of how, repairing a stay, I hung head down from the bowsprit, dipping into the roaring combers; of how I was washed overboard alone in mid-Atlantic; of how I clung up at the top of my loosened, whipping mast while the *Firecrest* disappeared beneath me under torrents of raging waves that made existence on deck impossible for a moment.

Yes, these were all real experiences, and others just as thrilling were of almost constant recurrence during over three months of my lonely voyage. And I realize that I have a story to tell that is unique not only for the feat of trans-Atlantic adventuring which it chronicles, but also for the individual battles of man's will against the elements which were my daily portion.

By Alain Gerbault

Illustrations by L. F. Wilford

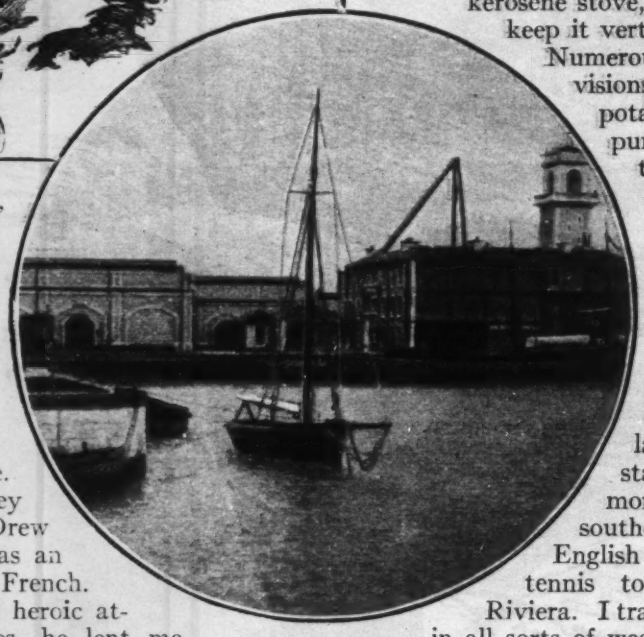
At right, Captain Gerbault poses on the bowsprit of his tiny transatlantic yacht, the "Firecrest," after his arrival at New York

A compact made with a friend in war days was the origin of my journey, but I had always from youth vaguely craved some such adventure. The greater part of my youth was spent at Dinard, a watering place near the old fortified town of St. Malo, in Brittany. St. Malo, by the way, was the home of the famous French corsairs, glory of our Navy three hundred years ago, and of Jacques Cartier who, in 1534, crossed the Atlantic and claimed Canada for France.

During this time when my father, a man of private means who spent a good part of his time on his yacht, was not taking me with him on long cruises, I was always trying to ship for a day or two at St. Malo with the hardy Breton fishermen.

Later I was sent to Paris for my studies and became a boarder in the famous College Stanislas. There I spent the most unhappy years of my life shut between high walls, longing to see the world, dreaming of adventure.

When the war came I enlisted in 1914 in the air



Above, becalmed in mid-Atlantic, Captain Gerbault spent the day mending sails and clothes; at right, the "Firecrest" in the Royal Dockyard at Gibraltar

service, and encountered that dreamed-of adventure in glorious quantity. I always flew alone in a fighting machine.

A young American, Sidney Rankin Drew, son of Sidney Drew and nephew of John Drew, was an aviator in my squadron, the 31st French. Shortly before his death in an heroic attack on fifteen German planes, he lent me several of Jack London's books, including "The Cruise of The Snark." It was then I first learned that it was possible to cross the ocean in a small boat One day between air fights, Jean Chaput, famous ace of the French army—and in my opinion the best pilot that ever lived—agreed to join me in a project of buying a boat, when the war was over, and sailing around the world for adventure, trading to pay the expenses of our trip. Alas, my friend died in the air and I was left alone at the Armistice.

AFTER the war I determined to carry out alone the pact I had made with my pal. And for two years I ransacked the ports of France and England, seeking a boat I could handle alone on such a journey. Finally at Southampton, I found the *Firecrest*.

I examined her from truck to keelson, sounded her oak timbers—and knew she was the craft of my dreams. For four hundred pounds sterling I became her proud owner

The *Firecrest* is a racing cutter, built thirty-two years ago, of oak and teak. She is narrow and deep for her length and quite different from the American sloop which is of great beam and small draft. Her length is 35 feet over all and 30 feet on the water line. Her seven feet draft is exceptionally deep for her size. This craft and the three tons and a half of lead she carried on her keel, added to three tons of inside ballast, make it nearly impossible for her to capsize. Her deck has the strength to resist the pressure when tons of green water break over her bow.

She is cutter rigged—that is, she has only one mast. Here I can hear the great army of American yachtmen exclaim: "A cutter or sloop is not fit for cruising alone. Why not a ketch or a schooner?" It is a matter of taste. In my opinion the cutter is the best cruising rig for a small boat, because it gives the maximum speed with the minimum sail area. Personally, I like rather to reef sails than to take them in.

The interior of my floating home comprises three compartments, separated by doors and bulkheads. Astern, my sleeping room with two bunks and lockers under them. On each side racks are filled with books. Forward of my sleeping room and amidships is a saloon with two cupboards that contain my tennis trophies. In the center is a folding table. In the bow is the forecastle with two folding cots and a galley. Here I cook my meals on a Norwegian kerosene stove, which is hung on gimbals to keep it vertical when the boat is rolling. Numerous lockers are filled with provisions—ship's biscuits, rice and potatoes. On the portside is a pump communicating with two tanks of fresh water. For light, I have a kerosene lamp and candles hung on gimbals.

My boat is now my only home. I carry aboard all my worldly possessions—books, tennis trophies, a few clothes and food.

I took my boat to the south of France, leaving England at the time Shackleton started on his last trip. During more than a year I cruised in southern waters with a young English boy, playing in the lawn tennis tournaments of the French Riviera. I trained hard physically, cruising in all sorts of weather, learning to handle my sails alone—preparing in every way for the ordeal ahead. Only when I felt myself ready, when I knew that I could stand the mental and physical strain, did I start on my cruise.

Finally, in the spring of last year, came the glorious day of departure. The gay harbor of Cannes lay basking in the spring sunshine, the old town and two square towers dominating the harbor on one side; on the other some fifty white yachts glistening along the quays. A little farther on, the *Lavengro*, a 120-ton ketch, was preparing to sail for Gibraltar—my first and last port of call. Although I had small chance to defeat a boat ten times bigger than mine and manned by a crew of seven, I did not want to be beaten at the start. I managed to weigh anchor first and get under way under all canvas. The light breeze was freshening and I had to take in my topsail, even as I passed between the moles.

Outside the harbor the wind was still fresher and I had to change my jib, reef my mainsail and do it quickly for I could now see the *Lavengro* leaving the harbor and

racing after me. We were both tacking against a strong head wind and although not sailing as fast as the *Lavengro*, I could keep the better wind. We were rushing toward the open sea, leaving the beautiful golden island of Lérins on the lee. My lee rail was soon deeply buried in the water, with spray splashing aboard. It was an oilskin job to steer.

But my heart was light and as the *Firecrest's* bow cut the waves, I found myself singing:

"Oh, I am the cook and the captain bold
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig;
And the bo'sun tight, and the midshipmite
And the crew of the captain's gig."

The glass was falling and black clouds appeared ahead. At 4:30 o'clock I crossed the *Lavengro's* bow, close-hauled on the other tack, just as a strong squall struck us. In haste I lowered my mainsail and took in my jib. As the task was finished I caught a last glimpse of the *Lavengro* running before the gale in the opposite direction.

I was now so tired from the exertions of the day that I hove-to for the night under storm jib and close-reefed mainsail, and left my boat to take care of herself while I went below and turned in.

Here are some of the extracts from my log book:

"At two in the morning the wind shifts to northwest. My log records 30 miles in three hours. I can hardly hope for better speed. The glass is falling. A strong gale is still blowing. At six in the evening the wind increases again. It is very difficult to keep the boat on its course. Soon it becomes quite dangerous to run before the wind. I am going almost as fast as the following sea; so when a wave breaks aboard the green seas stay on the deck a dangerously long time.

"The operation of taking in my sail nearly cost me my life. The square sail yard, 20 feet long, is twice as long as my boat's beam. As I take it in, my boat—now under bare poles—rolls violently in the trough of the sea. The lee-end of the yard drags in a wave and I am nearly hurled overboard. Only after fully an hour of breath-taking acrobatics do I have the yardarm and sail safely stowed——"

For several days my little boat and I battled on through rains and gales. During the day I put on all the sail I could and held to my course, and at night, dog-tired, I would leave only enough canvas aloft to keep the boat headed-up into the wind, and myself go below and roll into my bunk.

At last one morning, the 15th day of May, I discovered towering from the mists ahead a monstrous rock. It was Gibraltar's eastern side, which one cannot contemplate from the sea without a feeling of awe, so much has man's work altered nature. It has so many geometrical lines, which are tanks to collect rain water, platforms, guns and railways and numerous tunnels, that it looks absolutely artificial.

Toward noon I rounded Europa Point, and entered the naval harbor as a gale of the Levant was rising. I dropped anchor gaily near Vanderbilt's fine three-masted schooner, *Atlantic*, which in 1905 won the famous trans-atlantic yacht race.

Cooking became an almost impossible feat when the storm-tossed boat pitched madly; at left, how the lone mariner steered for hours on end

I was boarded at once by the police, the port's doctor and the naval authorities. Everybody was very much surprised to discover that I was alone and had come from France. How amazed they would have been had they known whither I was bound! "You will never be seen alive again," they would surely have told me.

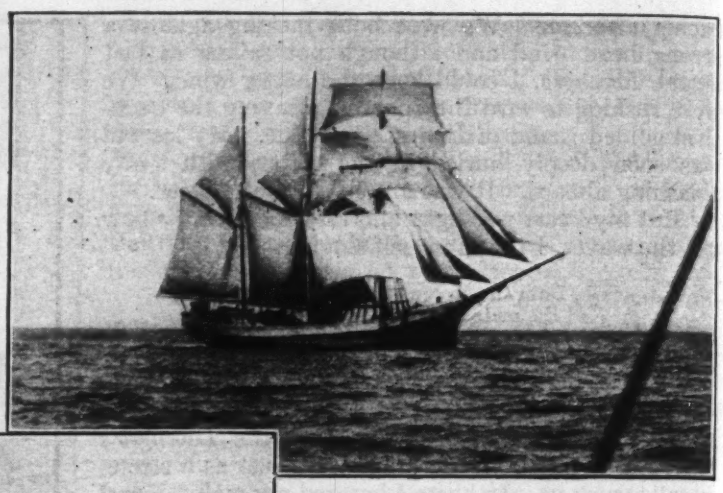
I spent two weeks at Gibraltar, fitting out for my long passage, and then, on the sixth of June, before weighing anchor I sent to the old friend who alone knew my real intentions the following post card: "100 gallons of fresh water; 80 pounds of salt beef; 60 pounds of ship's biscuit; together with butter, bacon, potatoes, rice, condensed milk and tea. Before me, 4500 miles of open ocean, and the most gallant of little ships."

Before leaving France, I had purchased a wind chart, which purported to show the direction of the prevailing winds on the Atlantic. It indicated that a voyager sailing southwest from the Straits of Gibraltar would soon strike the northeast trade winds which would carry him with fair winds far south of the Tropic of Cancer. Thence, according to the chart, he would find the prevalent winds southeast giving him fair breezes up past Bermuda to the Atlantic coast and New York.

Although that course would carry me far to the south of a direct course to New York and add many hundreds of miles to the distance to be sailed, I deter-

mined to follow it rather than to try to beat my way straight across the Atlantic against prevalent head winds. Neither feat had ever been accomplished alone before. I decided at least to give myself the advantage of the easier way.

Joshua Slocum, in 1895, and Blackburne, in 1902, crossed the Atlantic alone, from west to east, stopping at the Azores. The longest distance covered without touching was two thousand miles. I knew that my trip would be at least twice as long and could very well last from forty days to four months. I knew that the longest passage made alone before had been made by Slocum who was forty-two days at sea in the Indian Ocean. I was carrying provisions for four months. During the passage I congratulated myself many times on my foresight, for my trip lasted 101 days, and for 90 days I was out of sight of land!



One of the few passing ships seen from the deck of the "Firecrest" during her long trip; at left, books helped while away days of calm

As I left Gibraltar I lay on deck basking in the sun and dreaming of the days that were to come—but little did I foresee the almost insuperable hardships that lay ahead!

That evening at 6 o'clock, the *Firecrest*, running before an east wind passed Monoqui, an old Moorish fort, the last promontory of the European coast. There I fell into company with two large three-masted schooners and was delighted to note that the *Firecrest* held her own with them.

As night fell the wind increased until it blew half a gale. I could then see the light of Tangier. By ten o'clock it was blowing a full gale. The wind suddenly veered to the southeast, dead ahead, and my first jib was blown to pieces. Then came a heavy downpour of rain, but I determined to have a good night's sleep, come what might. So I hove-to under close-reefed mainsail and staysail, went below and turned in.

IT was blowing hard, but the *Firecrest* behaved beautifully in the confused seas of the Straits, heeling to the blast when her sails filled with wind and then rounding-to and shaking most of the wind from her canvas. Then her bow would fall off until her mainsail was again partly filled with wind. So she backed and filled all night while below I slept, certain that whatever the night or morrow held in store my cutter and I would be equal to it.

At 2 p. m. on the third day, I finally lost sight of Cape Spartel on the African coast. I was clear of all land, and the world of water was now wholly mine. However, I did not dream then that my next sight of land would be Nantucket Island, off the American coast, 4500 miles—and three months—away.

Running before the wind, the *Firecrest* would not steer herself under whole canvas. After steering in daylight for twelve hours continuously, being all the time careful to avoid gybing, I became utterly tired. And I knew that I must conserve my strength for longer battles to come. Indeed, I was not far at sea before I discovered the first serious portent of troubles ahead. I had been swindled by the ship chandlers at Gibraltar where I laid in most of my supplies. The salt beef was good at the top of the barrel, but farther down it was largely bones and fat.

My cooking was done on an oil stove in the narrow forecastle. It stood on the starboard locker, swinging in gimbals so that, theoretically, the top would always be level no matter how the boat heeled or pitched. In practice, however, it often failed.

The roll of the *Firecrest* was sometimes so great that the swinging part suspended below the gimbals hit against the widespread legs that supported it. Then off would go my kettle of boiling water or frying pan filled with bacon into the corner of the forecastle or into the middle of the floor.

I was wearing few clothes. My legs and feet were bare, for I had often to hang on with my toes when both hands were occupied. Now and then in the galley a dash of boiling water or a spray of hot fat burned my feet. Soon I was a worried, disreputable-looking and uncomfortable mariner.

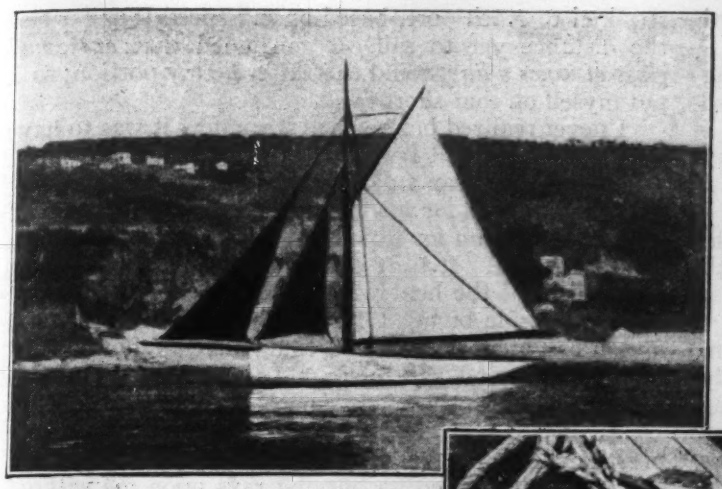
In such a narrow place, so limited that a fat man could hardly turn around, a cook learns to take a lot of bumps. The rolling motion as the *Firecrest* ran before the sea was not so bad, although it put my sea legs to a hard test; but when she pitched and rolled at the same time, she often threw me against the sides of the forecastle with a hard bump.

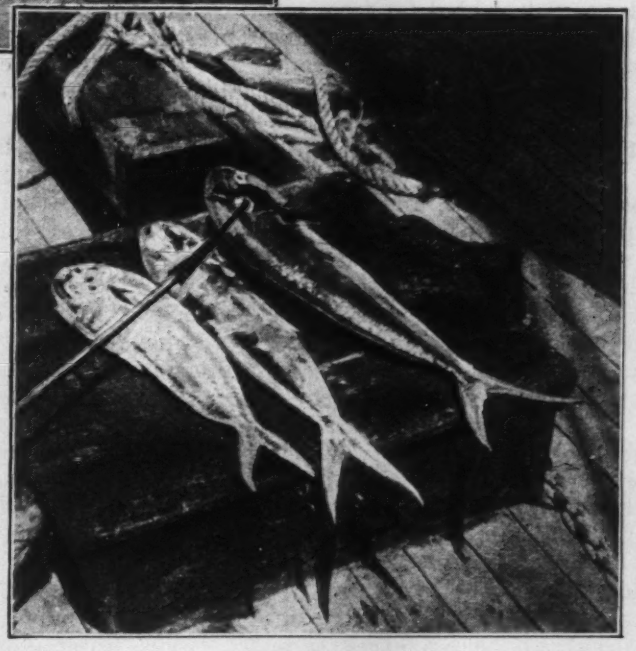
By six o'clock every morning I went on deck, rolled out the reef from my mainsail, cast off the tiller lashing and was on my way.

In the Navy a sailor has four hours on duty and four hours off. It was a fatiguing task to steer twelve hours in succession, as I did.

The days passed quickly. I was always admiring the thing of beauty that was the *Firecrest*, flying before the strong breeze.

If the gale was not too strong I would lie on my back, reading one of my favorite books or mending a sail, meanwhile steering with my feet. Just before sunset I would call it a day and go below to prepare supper. This usually consisted of salt beef, rice and potatoes. I cooked my "spuds" in salt water to save my store of fresh, and I found that it gave them a delicious flavor.





The "Firecrest" cruising along the shores of Southern France, at right, the first haul of bonitos that helped eke out the meagre food supply

Perhaps my appetite was sharpened not only because of my exertions, but also because I limited myself to two meals a day—breakfast and supper.

Immediately after supper I always tumbled, dog-tired, into my bunk and rolled up in my blankets. A sailor at sea cannot use sheets because they are always damper than wool.

IF coastwise sailors of small boats are disposed to marvel that a man should leave his deck, shut his gangway and go to sleep, I can assure them that in such a craft as the *Firecrest* it is reasonably safe. If I could carry any sail at all the boat lay easy, pitching to the long seas. She would ship some water now and then, but it all ran off the deck. Night after night I did this even in gales.

Since starting, I had been eager for the first sight of flying fish. So I was delighted when, on June 10th, a silver streak shot out of the water close aboard and disappeared from sight. It was long before I saw another, and when I did I welcomed it more for its food value than its beauty.

Noon sights at the sun and reckoning by chronometer showed that the *Firecrest* had reeled off 55 miles on June 9 and 88 on June 10. We were making splendid progress. By noon on June 11, we had covered 90 miles in the 24 hours—only 12 of which was actual sailing.

I began to think my passage would be a quick one. To average seven and a half miles an hour, is fast going for a small boat. With a good crew to steer while I slept and help me handle her, the *Firecrest* would have made some wonderful runs in this weather.

The next day, the *Firecrest* broke her bobstay and I had a difficult task repairing it. For those not used to boats I will explain that the bobstay is a wire rope that fastens to the stem of the cutter just under the water line and runs out to the end of the bowsprit. By the wire jib which runs thence to the masthead it carries some of the strain put upon the mast when the boat is pitching heavily in head seas.

To repair it, I had to cling to the end of the bowsprit. That is one of the worst places on board a small craft when the seas are running high. One is likely to be washed off as the boat dips her bowsprit deep into the green seas and lifts it out again.

I had to work with both hands and cling on with my bare legs. Several times the *Firecrest* dipped me completely out of sight under the seething green water. But I desperately kept my hold—and what did I care for the wetting? The ocean was not cold and I had no clothes on to bother me.

As I worked I recalled—not without tremors akin to fear—an account I once read of a small boat, discovered after a gale in the English Channel with nobody on board. In the log was written: "Have to go to the end of the bowsprit to make repairs. Shall I come back?" It was a discomforting thought.

For the succeeding four days we made good runs—the *Firecrest* and I—varying from 52 to 72 miles a day. By the afternoon of June 17, I had covered 620 miles from Gibraltar and I was thinking of a short passage with wind all the way!

Then that afternoon I ran out of the trade winds. The gale died in less than half an hour and the *Firecrest* wallowed in an oily sea and dead calm. I put all my wet clothes and bedding on deck to dry.

Nineteen days passed before I again picked up the north-east trade winds. Meantime I found opportunity to go over my ripped mainsail with palm and needle and repair the damage made by the recent heavy weather. It was difficult to sew up the ripping seams on deck and I broke so many of my sail needles that I began to wonder if I had enough to last me into port.

It was during this period that I made an important discovery which later rendered life easier. I learned that I could set the sails so that the *Firecrest* would steer herself before the wind. Hauling down the mainsail and setting in its place the trysail—a leg-o'-mutton sail without boom or gaff—and by trimming the jib in flat, the *Firecrest* would follow her course without my hand on the tiller. If she broached-to under the press of the trysail, the jib would fill and put her back on her course.

This meant more to me than you can imagine. It gave me freedom from the strain of 12 hours a day at the tiller. Of course, it meant reduced speed in miles per hour, as the trysail was much smaller than the mainsail. But I could let the *Firecrest* sail herself all night and the 24 hours of sailing at reduced speed was about equal to 12 hours of sailing with all the canvas I had been able to carry. Thereafter I obtained more rest and suffered less from strain.

This was on June 20. For four days thereafter I never put hand or foot to the tiller.

Still there was plenty of work to be done, for it seemed as if I had no sooner repaired one thing than another would become worn out. By this time, June 23, I was over the big depths of the ocean, the chart recording 3,500 fathoms. I was surprised to note that I had seen almost no life since leaving the Straits of Gibraltar, not

even a porpoise or a sea gull. The ocean was deserted except for the *Firecrest*.

Despite occasional calm spells I had been logging from 50 to 60 miles a day, but my sails were chafing so badly and needing to be repaired so frequently that I feared my twine would not hold out. I wondered if my sails would last until I reached New York. "What do I care! I shall hoist my blankets"—and I smiled as I thought of the stupefaction of the New Yorkers should they see a small French yacht entering the harbor with red and blue blankets spread as sails.

THE sun was now nearly directly overhead at noon. On the afternoon of June 26 I began to feel giddy from sunstroke and my head ached. This lasted during the following day. On June 28 I sighted far from my boat the first fish since Gibraltar. They were shy bonitos —sometimes called dolphins by English sailors. I could see their colors changing from electric blue to green. I rigged up a fishline, but they would not take the hook. They looked good to eat and I should relish a bonito steak.

The bobstay broke again on June 30, and I had to repair it from the same perilous perch upside down on the bowsprit, with the usual gasping and spluttering moments of immersion when the *Firecrest* saw fit to duck me. Next day, Sunday, the wind increased to a moderate gale. It struck me as odd that the seas ran so short here in mid-Atlantic where I expected to find the long ocean swell. There were four or five choppy waves to the length of my boat.

From my log of July 4: "For the first time, two flying fishes land on deck. They are little fellows, the biggest one only 5 inches long and the other a veritable minnow only an inch and a half long. But my joy is great.

"They are fresh food and I hasten to fry them and find them of a most delicate flavor.

"It breezes up to a strong gale and the seas are constantly breaking over my deck. I have to roll three turns in my mainsail. The wind nearly blows my staysail to ribbons before I can get it in, and I have to put canvas covers on the skylights to keep the water out. The boat is jumping viciously and there is a heavy strain on the bowsprit. The starboard wire masthead runner breaks and I have to replace it with good old Manila rope, which I like better than wire.

"It seems like a western monsoon, but who ever heard of such a thing farther north than Cape Verde? However, everything seems unusual on this trip of the *Firecrest*."

I ran into the Sargasso Sea on July 6 and saw some of the weeds which mark that great eddy in mid-ocean. All conditions still seemed favorable when suddenly I made an alarming discovery. Most of my supply of fresh water had spoiled!

About thirty gallons of my supply was in galvanized tanks beneath the floors of the forecastle, from which I pumped it to the galley. All the rest was in water casks, purchased at Gibraltar, one of which was lashed on deck and the others stowed in a corner of the forecastle.

It was the contents of these casks that had gone bad. When I drew on it I found the water had turned red and it tasted too sour to use. I pondered whether there was any way in which I could restore its freshness, but could think of none and so I threw it all overboard.

This left me with only 15 gallons of good water with some 2500 miles yet to sail and prospects that I should be at sea for at least a month more. I know of no greater calamity at sea than to run short of water, unless it be shipwreck.

I carefully estimated the probable number of days required to reach port, based on my speed thus far and the distance yet to sail. I concluded that *one small glass of water a day* would thereafter be my portion; so I put myself on that short ration.

I never realized before what a comfort it was to have plenty of water—all I wanted to drink, cook and wash. There was an ocean full of it all around, but the only things it was good for was to sail over and boil potatoes in!

The tropic sun for which I had longed now became a torment to me. It beat on my head and on the deck. Every part of the boat was hot and dry and none more than the inside of my throat. Twice a day I allowed myself half a cup of water. I could have swallowed it all in one gulp, but I had to sip and enjoy it to the fullest. I dreamed constantly of clear pools and running streams.

Anxiously I scanned the horizon daily for clouds to presage the coming of rain. But the skies were clear, the tropic sun pelted its burning rays upon me without mercy. I had to do all my cooking in sea water and this added to my thirst.

On July 7, my boat gybed unexpectedly while I was enjoying half a cup of tea in the saloon and one of the topping lifts parted under wear. I spliced it. For the next few days I carried a strong easterly wind and a heavier gust than usual ripped my flying jib from the bolt ropes and tore it to ribbons. Without that headsail the *Firecrest* would not steer herself well.

I have constantly to repair one sail after another. It is good to have plenty of wind, but hard on my old sails.

The sargasso weed becomes more plentiful. I am in the southern part of the famous sea. Where are all the flying fishes? When will it rain? My thirst is increasing. Although I have not killed the ill-fated albatross, I am haunted by the "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner:"

"Water, water everywhere—
Nor any drop to drink."

Then I notice that the cask of salt beef gives off a bad odor. Am I going to run short of food, too?

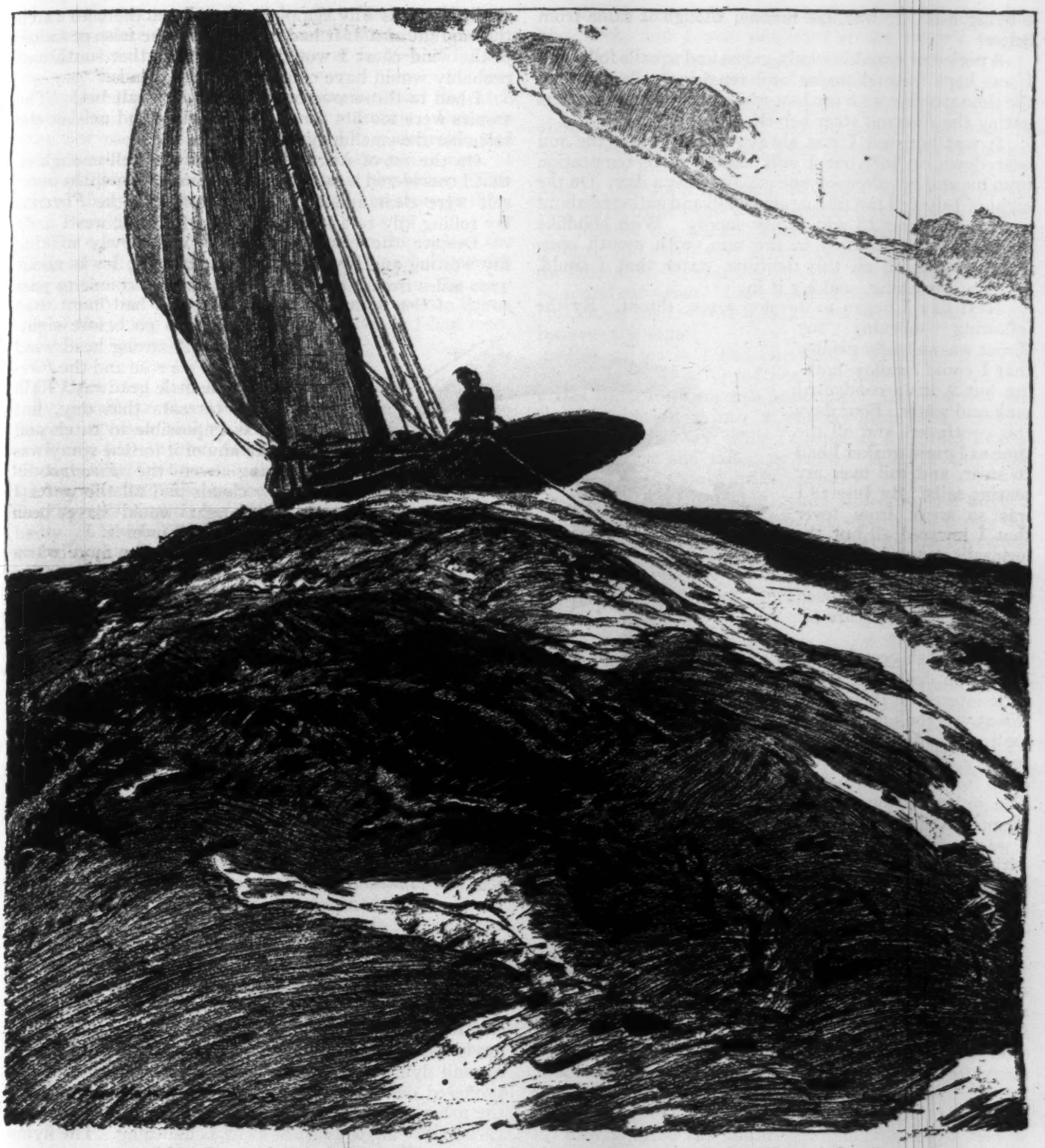
With water short, meat spoiling and my sails rotten and ripping daily, here I was in mid-Atlantic, far from the tracks of shipping, my only hope to pull safely through the adventure being to forge bravely ahead.

And now came an experience which nearly ended my voyage once for all. I am not given to superstition—but Friday, July 13, was the day it happened.

The *Firecrest* was rolling horribly, the seas running mountains high and things had been breaking aboard since the early morning. Finally the spinnaker boom broke and fell overboard. There was nothing to do but walk out on the madly gyrating bowsprit and try to recover it. But as I put my feet on the crosstree, which spreads the bowsprit shrouds, it cracked and, before I could recover myself, threw me sprawling into the tempestuous seas. In that sickening moment, comparable only to the desperate thrills of an air battle, an appalling realization of my prospects swept over me: the boat driving forlornly on alone and I left there to linger a few moments on the maddened wash of waters. Was this to be the end of the glorious cruise I had planned?

PERHAPS it was the sheer desperation into which I was thus instantly plunged that nerved me to the supreme effort I must have made. How I managed it I have never known, but apparently I caught hold of the bobstay, for I woke from my horrible dream to find myself crawling back on board ship. Even the slippery wave-washed deck of a storm-tossed boat looks like a haven of safety to you after you have taken a dip like that in mid-ocean.

Meanwhile things were breaking so fast that I could not repair them. But having survived the calamities of



"Oh, I am the cook and the captain bold and the mate of the 'Nancy' brig"

Friday the 13th, I felt ready to face anything the next day, the French national holiday. I dressed the ship as best I could by running up the French colors, the flags of the Yacht Club of France, and my private burgee.

It was one of those days when, as they say, the wind and the sea came "butt-end to." By ten o'clock the *Firecrest* was tearing along before a gale from east-northeast. Waves which seemed to me at least twenty feet high came roaring over the starboard quarter, stood the little *Firecrest* almost on her nose and swept her deck from stern to stem. It was hard work hanging on deck when the big ones came and by night I was exhausted.

Under headsails only, the *Firecrest* was steering herself. I went below and let the gale rage. I found things in a terrible mess under decks, for I had had no chance to clean up there for two days. Before turning in, I put things in order, but to little permanent effect for the boat rolled terribly all night.

When I went on deck the next morning, the honest little craft was holding as true to her course as if my hand had been at the tiller. And yet landsmen can wonder why a sailor learns to love his boat and think of her as an individual with a personality!

And now, realization of my dream, I found some flying fish on deck! I breakfasted joyfully on fresh food for the first time in weeks. Next day there were more of them. Only a man who has lived on rancid salt beef and ship's biscuit can truly appreciate the delicious flavor of

a flying fish. It was like manna, though it came from below.

A period of variable winds, calms and squalls followed. I was kept busy changing and repairing sails, some of the time steering with my foot while I sewed and at others letting the *Firecrest* steer herself.

It was hot and I was always thirsty when the sun beat down on me; but I still had to force temptation from me and get along on one cup of water a day. On the night of July 17 I ran into a rain squall and gathered about a quart of water to add to my supply. With childlike delight I sat unclothed in the rain, with mouth open trying to absorb all this delicious water that I could, sucking, breathing, soaking it in.

Next day I began to develop a sore throat. By the following morning my throat was so badly swollen that I could swallow nothing but a little condensed milk and water. Four days this continued, and all the time as I grew weaker I had to steer, and toil over my tearing sails. By July 28 I was so weak from fever that I lowered all but the headsails, went below and turned in, leaving the *Firecrest* to take care of herself while I let nature care for me.

Flying fish occasionally landed on deck, but I had little interest in them. My throat was too sore to allow me to eat. It was too hot to stay on deck and too close for comfort below. The inflammation of my throat seemed to sharpen my thirst and it was sheer torture for me to keep within my allowance of one cup of water a day. But the *Firecrest* rose gallantly to the emergency and sailed as if she realized her reponsibility.

By the morning of the 29th of July I was feeling a little better, although extremely feeble after four days of slender milk diet. The handling of the sails took four times as long, now, owing to my weakness. I steered true west all that day and at night got a restful sleep, for the wind had gone and the sea was smooth.

Then for a week I was caught in the doldrums. One calm and blistering day succeeded another until it seemed to me that my very brain was burning with the scorching heat of the tropic sun.

My condition at that time was hardly to be envied—rotten sails that required constant sewing and patching, a little bad water, no wind, and myself still sick and weak. It was surely not a pleasure cruise now, yet there was a certain sense of satisfaction in meeting and surmounting these obstacles. I knew that they would pass and that before I reached the American coast I would get wind enough—an anticipation which was more than abundantly fulfilled by the astounding gales that followed.

An entry in my log at that time reads:

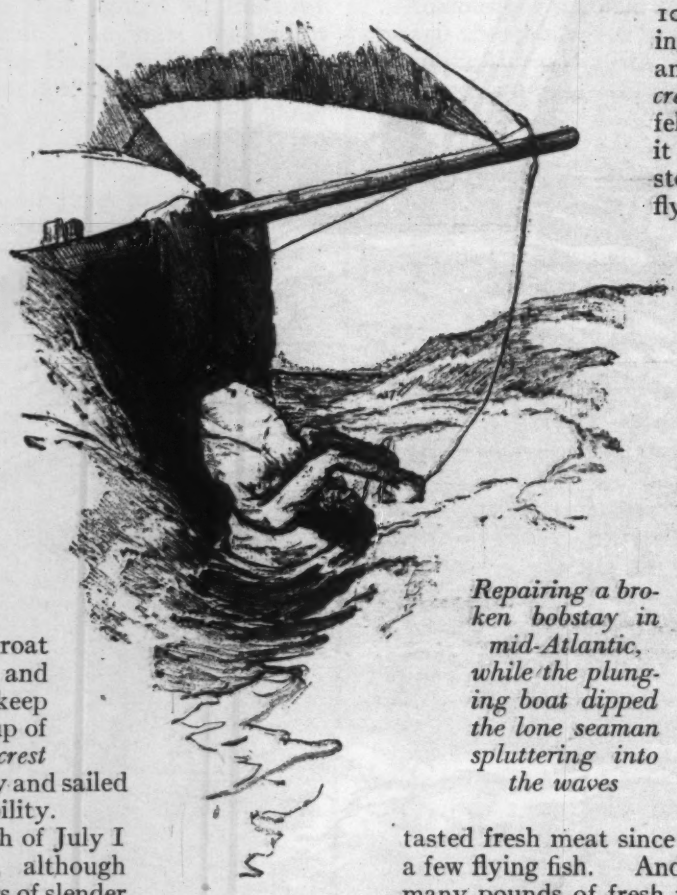
"Very hot, terribly thirsty. Should like to take a swim, but my throat is still so sore I had better not.

"I have certainly lost the trade winds. This is the second time my wind chart has lied to me. It promised fair winds. The *Firecrest* is lolling about in a greasy swell, her sails idly flapping when I set them to catch the vagrant airs. If it had not been for the false promises of the wind chart I would have gone further south and probably would have caught southeast winds."

I had to throw overboard my cask of salt beef. The tropics were too hot for it and I could stand neither the taste nor the smell longer.

On the 1st of August my throat was well enough so that I considered it safe to take a swim. The depths overside were clear and cool as any lake and the *Firecrest* lay rolling idly to a long undulation from the west.

Despite the heading winds, I was slowly making my westing and by August 2, 54 days out, I was about 1700 miles from New York. I shaped my course to pass south of the Bermuda Islands, but still had more than 1000 miles to go before sighting them. A strong head wind and rough sea rose and the *Firecrest* made little headway. Rain fell in torrents that day, but it was impossible to catch and store any of it for the spray was flying over the *Firecrest* in clouds and all the water I caught would have been brackish from it.



Repairing a broken bobstay in mid-Atlantic, while the plunging boat dipped the lone seaman spluttering into the waves

Then came more warm and pleasant weather. The boat steered herself and I lay lazily on deck peering over the rail, trying to pierce the depths, 3,000 fathoms down. Suddenly my attention was caught by three shapes following the boat. Swimming several feet under the surface in the *Firecrest's* shadows were a trio of bonitos, or horse mackerel. They were big fellows, almost five feet long.

More than two weeks before I had thrown away my salt beef. I had not tasted fresh meat since leaving Gibraltar except for a few flying fish. And here swimming near me are many pounds of fresh fish. My mouth watered in anticipation of a horse-mackerel steak. It was more exciting than any gale. I promptly turned from lazy navigator to assiduous fisherman, with hook and line and a small flying fish as bait. But my quarry ignored the proffered delicacy, although directly ahead of my boat the fish were flying and the bonitos were jumping after them. The big ones are as swift as lightning. The flying fish have little chance to escape them.

If the bonitos feed on flying fish, why would they not bite at mine? It must be because it did not fly. I wanted those fish—somehow I must get one. But how? I tried shooting them with my rifle and managed to hit one, but he sank so quickly that even if the boat were not moving I could not have caught him by diving.

Next I tried to spear one with my grain—a sort of harpoon with three prongs; but they were wary and kept well beyond my reach.

In despair I gave up and sat on the rail, trailing my bare feet luxuriously in the water, idly handling the harpoon as I wondered what next to try. Then the unexpected happened. Three bonitos made a dash for my toes. They were quick, but I was quicker. My harpoon was ready in hand and I speared one at the

first rush. Soon, at some slight risk of losing a few toes, I had another—a three-foot bonito floundering on deck.

Here was fresh food in plenty, at last—and I knew the way to catch more.

Apparently the bonitos were curious and to catch one all you had to do was attract its attention. But soon they got used to seeing my feet trailing alongside and lost interest in them. I had to find something new. I tried trailing a white-enameled plate in the water. This stirred their curiosity anew and soon I had more of them than I could eat.

The colors of these fish as they lay on the deck of the *Firecrest* were amazing. Their electric-blue bodies with long golden tails passed through all the hues of the rainbow, finally becoming fixed green with gold spots. It was one of the many marvels of the sea of which I had read, but never before had seen.

THAT day I discovered a curious kind of marine growth on the side of my boat. They looked like flowers of black and white.

I now had an abundance to eat, but little to drink. Though I am by no means a prohibitionist, I carried no spirits, not even wine, on the *Firecrest*. I did not need it. But by this time I was beginning to need good water badly. I had to filter all I drank through a cloth and it tasted foul.

Next day I had bonito boiled for breakfast, fried for lunch and boiled for supper. I ate the largest part of a three-foot fish.

Next day the blessed rains came, and I felt that I was living in the midst of plenty once more. I can hardly tell you how welcome that water was. I had begun to dread even as I craved the scant allowance of water I was permitted, for it was getting positively nauseating from the heat and long storage in a tank.

As the black clouds gathered on the western horizon, rising mightily from the sea like huge mountains of pitch, and frowning upon my little vessel as though bent on engulfing her in some awful disaster, I simply laughed in their faces, for I knew the sturdiness of the little *Firecrest*, and I welcomed eagerly the rain they carried.

Forked lightning zigzagged blindingly across the towering peaks of utter blackness and lit the glassy ocean with a ghastly glare. Clearly I was in for a summer squall. The vast curtain of cloud rolled up over the heavens, blotting out star after star, as if to hide a tragedy about to be staged in that little part of the world where my *Firecrest* and I awaited the onset.

Soon I heard the comforting patter of raindrops on the deck, and I was reminded of the sailor's saying:

"When rain comes before the wind
Topsail sheets and halyards mind."

The wind would come next, and sail should be shortened to meet it. It did come a-sizzling, and the cutter reeled under it, but when the first fierce onslaught passed, by lowering the gaff and lifting the boom, I was able to transform my mainsail into a sort of big pocket and there collect the water, draining it into the cask at the foot of the mast. Thus I managed to catch ten gallons, and this liquid store was far more important to me than even the catch of bonitos. It meant little short of actual salvation. I felt assured now that I would not lack either food or water, for the sea brought one and the heavens the other.

But evidently I had partaken a little too freely of my prized bonitos, for my head and legs began to ache—I was suffering from fish poisoning. The *Firecrest* was thrashing heavily into a choppy head sea, making hardly any headway, while I turned in, so ill that I cared little whether she sailed or sank. What if the long-expected gales should strike me now?

And the next morning, while still only half alive, I found that I was in for them. It was the 64th day out from Gibraltar; I was 500 miles east of the Bermúda Islands and approximately 1200 miles from New York. There had been rain squalls and a confused sea all night. The wind was westerly and very strong, dead ahead. I had shaped my course to pass south of Bermuda and cut the Gulf Stream so far south as to get the benefit of its northeasterly current in carrying me up to New York.

During the forenoon we lay practically hove-to under forestay sail while I forced my complaining muscles to repair several rips in the mainsail. By afternoon, when I was ready to set it again, the wind had increased to a gale.

The seas were running high. The deck was constantly under water. In addition, of course, the narrow cutter lay heeled over before the blast as she drove into the sea burying her lee rail at times several feet under water. I quote from my log:

"The deck slopes like the roof of a house and I have to exercise the utmost care in moving about. One slip and I shall go overboard to leeward, and the cutter, with no one on board, will sail on her way alone leaving me ingloriously as food for the very bonitos I had counted on for my own food supply."

[*To be Continued*]

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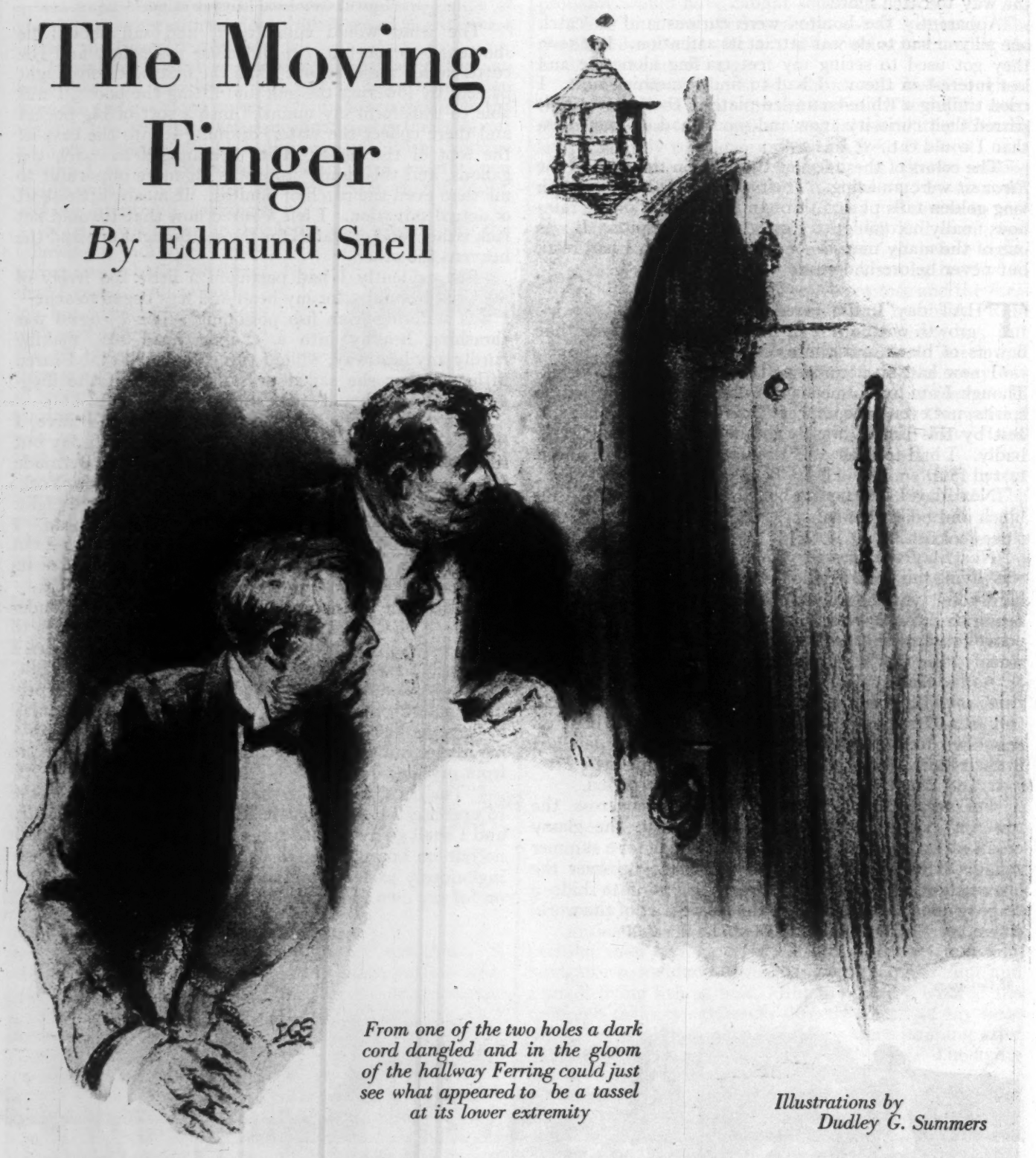
Bryce Canyon, in Central Utah, which contains thousands of towers and pinnacles, many of them as tall as skyscrapers

Ferring and the Lady of the Blue Cloak Meet Again in—

The Moving Finger

By Edmund Snell



From one of the two holes a dark cord dangled and in the gloom of the hallway Ferring could just see what appeared to be a tassel at its lower extremity

Illustrations by Dudley G. Summers

THE only difference between Sunday and any other day was that the Signor Luigi Scardovi shaved! Upon these fifty-two momentous occasions of the year this placid, portly *avvocato* rose early, assumed each article of clothing with meticulous care and sauntered to the little barber's in the Via Grimaldi, where old Maggio waited for the appearance of the best-known personality in Alessandria to open his shop.

When he left the house of the good Maggio, reformed in appearance at least, his square chin smooth and unblemished, Scardovi was always in his best mood. Considering the circumstances that brought him there, it was as well perhaps for Alan Ferring—that short, fair-haired wanderer over the earth's surface—that he should meet the illustrious lawyer on one of these occasions, and recognize in him an old acquaintance.

"*Morta la gallina!*" ejaculated the elder man, rubbing his eyes, as if suspecting they played him false. "It is surely the little Englishman who rescued me from that murderous apache in Nice!"

Ferring flushed. "It is exceedingly good of you to

remember that incident," he returned, with a boyish grin.

The lawyer raised both palms in the air at once.

"It would be very ungrateful of me to forget such a service. And so you have come to Alessandria! Splendid! You have breakfasted?"

Ferring shook his head. "I arrived only ten minutes ago."

"Better still! If you have nothing better to do, we will go along to my flat in the Via Plana. You shall see how my housekeeper makes coffee."

The Englishman hesitated. In the bright light of an Italian summer morning the chauffeur's cap and borrowed green overcoat, that he still wore over his evening clothes, made him feel conspicuous.

"SIGNOR SCARDOVI," he said, "I am more than grateful to you for your kind offer of hospitality. Shelter and a change of clothing are the two things I need more than anything at this moment; but I can accept nothing at your hands until I feel certain that helping my unfortunate self will not bring upon you the vengeance of the people who, even at this moment, are dogging my heels." He caught the other's arm and drew him into the shelter of a convenient alleyway. "Listen. Fifteen hours ago I was as welcome in Italy as any casual tourist. Do you know Spalanza?"

The lawyer's face fell. "The man most to be feared in all Italy," he murmured.

"A slight incident outside the opera house at Turin earned for me his undying hatred. He sent a girl to a restaurant to decoy me to some spot from which he was determined I should never return. It was the girl herself who took pity on me and helped to plan my escape. Spalanza's car was outside. I surprised the driver, pitched him—bound hand and foot—into the motor and was about to drive away in these clothes when the owner burst from the restaurant and boarded. The girl was with him.

"I drove into the night, seeking some suitable spot in which to dump the car and its occupants—and run for it. There was a tree across the road. We collided. The chauffeur was killed outright, the girl escaped with a twisted ankle, Spalanza was unconscious in the road and I was thrown into a cornfield. In my mad career, I had not noticed a second car that followed. I heard voices and, with Spalanza's pistol in my pocket, ran for dear life.

"There were four of them, all armed, and yet, Signor Scardovi, I need not tell you it was not fear that made me run. I realized that I could not afford awkward complications and I had no desire to compromise the girl. I came to Alessandria partly by train, partly by a carrier's van I picked up on the way. I tried to bribe the man to exchange his hat for mine, but he grew suspicious and refused. A dozen times I contemplated throwing the thing into a ditch, but realized that to travel hatless would render me more conspicuous still. I could not discard the coat, because I have a white shirt and dinner jacket underneath.

"If you know Spalanza, you understand the power he wields. He is out for the overthrow of the present government, a ruthless, domineering, unforgiving giant, whose political Camorra boasts branches in every city. Possibly I am being followed at this moment."

The genial Scardovi slipped an arm through his.

"In that case, I am doubly bound to assist you. Come along. Our coffee will be spoiling and Amalia in ill humor for the rest of the day."

He piloted Ferring into the street again and urged him, half-unwillingly, across an open square, bordered with trees.

"How *doubly* bound?" inquired the Englishman suddenly.

Scardovi smiled. "There is already that debt of gratitude which, it seems, you would have me forget. Then, you must remember, I am a stanch supporter of the present régime, of which Spalanza is an avowed enemy. We turn to the left here."

They passed together through a doorway by the side of a bootmaker's shop and, mounting three flights of worn stone steps, paused before a door that bore the lawyer's name on a brass plate. Scardovi pressed the bell and a peasant woman, whose age approximated sixty, permitted the woodwork to swing back sufficiently far to reassure herself as to the nature of the callers.

"We are a trifle late, Amalia," said Scardovi cheerfully. "Also, I have brought a friend with me—a young Englishman who saved my life and reputation in Nice. I have explained to him there is no coffee in Italy like yours—and he is impatient to discover if I am right."

The room in which they came finally to rest was small and dark, with French windows opening upon a balcony that overlooked the street. It was cool, moreover, and its peaceful atmosphere gave Ferring the first sense of security since he had left Turin.

He threw off the green overcoat and, hanging it on a hook behind the door, perched the peaked cap on top of it.

"I can offer you Macedonian cigarettes," his host informed him as they sat down, "and I have in my cupboard just half a bottle of whisky that I had sent me from Scotland in '84."

The Englishman lifted his hands in pious horror.

"A cigarette, by all means—but whisky at nine in the morning!"

The lawyer leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"We'll reserve it until this evening—after dinner. I never had an opportunity of explaining to you that the portfolio I stood in danger of losing when we last met contained a considerable amount of money—funds that I had come to collect for a client of mine in this town. For three minutes my fate as a family lawyer was in your hands—and you did a great deal in those few minutes. To return to the question of the moment, we must find you clothes."

Ferring lit Scardovi's cigarette and his own.

"I have a couple of suit cases at a small hotel in Turin. I must arrange to have them sent on."

"We must move carefully and circumspectly," said Scardovi thoughtfully. "Spalanza is thorough. Before the accident he probably made certain of your movements. The Moving Finger is contrived to act even when the hand that controls it is still."

"THE Moving Finger!" echoed Ferring.

"That is the name of the faction of which Spalanza is the head. The grim significance of its purpose lies in the quotation from which it was borrowed:

> 'The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
> Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
> Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.'

A pretty conception! Nevertheless, it is as well to remember that these political assassins live up to their creed. Your hotel will most certainly be under close observation."

"But good heavens!" protested the Englishman. "I must have clothes!"

Amalia, kicking the door open with the toe of one foot and kicking it closed with the heel of the other, deposited a tray between them and departed.

"I'm afraid," said Scardovi, with a twinkle in his

eye, "that the combined wardrobes of my housekeeper and myself would serve no useful purpose as far as you are concerned. However, there are ways of thwarting even the Moving Finger, and if you care to leave the matter to me I'll guarantee to have your things delivered here within a couple of days. How do you like your coffee? With milk?"

"Black. By the way, Signor Scardovi, you spoke just now of dinner. I've been wondering if you couldn't dine with me at some quiet little place where we're not likely to be observed. You could lend me a hat and a mackintosh—and you see I'm dressed for dinner already!"

The lawyer, who was in the act of passing the other his cup, trembled so violently that the coffee spilled into the saucer.

"Dismiss any such idea from your mind at once. It would be the sheerest folly for you to leave here until we can make suitable arrangements for you to be conducted across the frontier."

Ferring took the cup and stirred the contents slowly.

"Now," he smiled back at his friend, "that is precisely where I've got to disappoint you. I've not the remotest intention of crossing the frontier, under any circumstances, unless a certain person goes with me. That person is at present in Spalanza's employ."

"*Morta la gallina!*" cried Scardovi, for the second time that morning. "I was forgetting there was a girl in the affair! You have fallen in love with the fair rescuer?"

"I rather believe I have," the Englishman admitted.

"You are quite safe, Pasqua,"
Ferring reassured her. "Hold my wrists tightly. I won't let you fall. Now, put your knees on the sill"

"At any rate, I've sworn to remain in Italy and, if Spalanza should recover from his accident, to protect her from him. Quite between ourselves, she acts as secretary to the main committee, as she did when her father founded the party. While on a mission to Sicily the Signor Patrini went overboard, assisted presumably by Spalanza who was jealous of his power. Spalanza then took the helm and steered the faction into the wild course of bloodshed it is now following—and Pasqua Patrini, for reasons of her own, stayed on."

"She is now anxious to sever her connection with the Moving Finger?"

"So I understand."

"Why didn't she come with you?"

"You are forgetting that, when Spalanza's car struck the tree, Miss Patrini sprained her ankle." He drew from his pocket a cigarette case of polished olivewood to which was attached a tasseled cord of blue silk, knotted in three places. "She is to come to me as soon as she is able or, failing that, to communicate with me Poste Restante, Alessandria. A meeting place may possibly be arranged between us and any messengers from her to me will always bear a similar box to that which I have just shown you."

"SPALANZA is not dead," Scardovi brought out suddenly.

Ferring looked up sharply. "How d'you know that?"

"It was in the Sunday papers. I saw a copy at the barber's just before we met. There were no particulars; just a report in the *late news* that there had been a motor accident and that he had escaped with minor injuries."

The Englishman smiled grimly.

"No mention of my part in the affair?"

"Nothing at all. I cannot prophesy what may appear in later editions, but I doubt very much if the society will want the police to take action. They have their own methods for punishing wrongdoers!"

Ferring nodded. "I've gathered as much already." He leaned forward and touched the other's sleeve. "Please don't delay any longer than you can help in getting me my clothes. I shall be on tenterhooks until I can be in a position to keep my promise to Pasqua. I've been an adventurer all my life, Signor Scardovi, but I've never achieved anything in particular unless I was dressed for the part. I tackled Spalanza once—although he's twice my weight. That was what all the trouble was about. He pushed some women aside in the queue for the opera—and I hauled him back by one ear. I don't believe I could tackle him again in this get-up, unless it were night. Wandering about looking like a waiter out of work doesn't appeal to me!"

"You Englishmen are a race apart," declared the lawyer, chuckling. "Taking Spalanza by an ear is no laughing matter, I can assure you; but, since you seem to treat it as a joke, I suppose I'm entitled to join in your amusement. In the face of such an achievement, driving off with his car pales into insignificance!"

"Oh, I haven't finished with him yet, by a long chalk," grinned Ferring.

"If you remain in Italy another week, you'll discover that to your cost." Scardovi was suddenly serious.

"Which proves that you don't know me yet."

"Which shows that you don't know Spalanza!" the Italian retorted, rising. He came to the back of Ferring's chair and placed both hands on the Englishman's shoulders. "Look here," he continued pleadingly, "our politics are nothing to you—or the fate of those who are concerned in them. I can promise you a safe conduct to Modena, Chiasso or Ventimiglia. After that you should be safe. Will you be advised by me?"

"I'm sorry, but it's out of the question," said the other firmly.

Scardovi moistened his lips.

"It's the lady in the case that worries you. Suppose I promise to accept your version of her political leanings. Suppose I swear to do all that is humanly possible to separate her from Spalanza?"

"It's awfully good of you—and all that; but I just can't," the Englishman replied.

Halfway to the door, the lawyer turned.

"Very well, we must take the consequences. I shall have to leave you here for some time. I'm going to make arrangements for your luggage to be fetched and all letters addressed to you to be collected. You'll be perfectly safe here. The cigarettes are on the shelf and, if you should require anything, call Amalia."

Ferring thanked him.

"There's one thing I should like to ask you," he said, "and that is why Spalanza smokes such putrid cigars. They smell like stale incense."

"You noticed them?" said the Italian.

"I couldn't help it. He passed me so closely last night that the fumes wafted straight to my nostrils."

"They say that he is mortally afraid of treachery and that he employs only a special brand, made expressly for himself. It is to be hoped they smoke better than they smell! *Addio!*" And Scardovi was gone.

Left to his own reflections, Ferring disposed himself as comfortably as he could. He was still aware of a strained feeling behind the eyes and a dull ache all over his body. These were the sole legacies of the events of the previous night and, in the light of calm reasoning, he found it difficult to believe that his position was as perilous as Pasqua and Scardovi declared. He lit a fresh cigarette and endeavored to review the affair from every possible point of view. Leaving the lawyer entirely out of the question, everything hinged on the girl in the blue mantello.

Suppose she had lied to him! In that case, his action had been entirely without justification and he was criminally responsible for the driver's death and his master's accident. Admittedly, it was not his fault that the tree had obstructed the road, but he had no earthly right to be in possession of the wheel at all. And yet Luigi Scardovi had accepted his wild adventure as if it had been the most natural thing in the world!

THE sound of women's laughter rose from the street below and, actuated merely by idle curiosity, Ferring rose from his chair and stepped out upon the balcony. As he did so, a man on an opposite balcony, who had been leaning on the iron rail, left his position and disappeared through windows that were open behind him. Every fibre alert, the Englishman followed suit. The action was so deliberate that it left no doubt in Ferring's mind as to the significance of the other's presence there. He was convinced that his aim was to discover whether the enemy of the Moving Finger was still sheltered between the four walls of Scardovi's flat. By thoughtlessly exposing himself, Ferring had lent him every assistance, and his sole consolation lay in the fact that, whereas before this occurred he had believed himself to be followed, he was now certain that Spalanza's spies had taken up the scent ever since he stepped from the train at Alessandria.

He went slowly back to his chair.

His first impulse was to write a note to his host, explaining what had occurred, and take up his quarters in the first suitable hotel that presented itself. It was the

least he could do under the circumstances, he decided, and cast his eye around the room in search of anything in the nature of a writing block. Upon a small table in a corner he caught sight of a scattered pile of envelopes. He was on his way toward them, when the bell rang sharply.

Ferring tiptoed to the door and listened intently. He heard another door open and close and the heavy steps of Amalia along the passage; a creaking of hinges and the deep harsh notes of a man's voice in answer to some question the servant had asked. The door slammed with a jar that seemed to shake the whole building and Ferring stepped back into the center of the apartment as Amalia entered, without knocking, and deposited a letter on the larger table. She stared hard at the Englishman, removed the coffee things and, muttering to herself in an unintelligible patois, left the room.

It was quite within the bounds of possibility that the letter had no bearing upon recent events, and yet, for some reason or other, it fascinated Ferring. It was addressed in a firm, bold hand to Scardovi. He picked it up, turned it over between his fingers and let it drop back to the table again. There was a crest on the back—a fine embossed oval and, within it, a black finger bent like a query mark.

"The Moving Finger!" The words formed themselves almost unconsciously on his lips. Perhaps, after all, it would be wiser to postpone his departure until the lawyer had revealed to him the contents of the note.

He took Spalanza's automatic from the green coat and examined it carefully. It was fully loaded.

Half an hour later Scardovi returned. He came in briskly, smiling all over his face.

"Well," he observed, "everything is arranged satisfactorily and the only question that exercises my mind is what the good Amalia intends giving us for luncheon. There is a letter for me?"

Ferring handed it to him, back uppermost.

"Already!"

"They must have set the machinery in motion as soon as the second car got back to Turin," smiled the Englishman.

Scardovi burst open the flap with his forefinger, read the contents, frowned, then screwed the thing up into a ball and was about to toss it into the street when Ferring intervened.

"It concerns myself?"

"Entirely."

"May I see it?"

The lawyer sought to evade the issue.

"There is absolutely nothing in it—nothing more than I should have expected. You can read it if you like, of course, but——"

Ferring took it from him. It bore the same symbol as the envelope and there was no signature.

"Signor Avvocato," it read. "You are requested to arrange for the Englishman Ferring to leave your house within an hour of receipt of this. Non-compliance with this instruction will render you liable to undergo the same punishment as is now awaiting your guest."

"And that's that," commented Ferring, thrusting the note into a pocket. "You're a sportsman, Signor Scardovi, but I'm not going to let you carry your chivalrous intentions to the point of absurdity. We've roughly five minutes in which to carry out their request. Good-by—and many thanks for all you have done. I'll let you know where to send my things."

He held out his hand, but, instead of taking it, the other turned the key in the lock and pocketed it.

"You are not going to leave here," he declared, "until the risk of appearing in public has diminished considerably. The insolence! To dictate terms to me—Luigi Scardovi! *Morta la gallina!* They shall pay handsomely for this!"

He stamped up and down the little room, his arms folded, his mustaches bristling with indignation. He dived presently into a cupboard and produced therefrom an antiquated brace and bit.

"What are you going to do with that?" queried Ferring, with an amused smile.

"I shall bore a hole in the outer door so that we may scrutinize all callers before admitting them. I have complained to the landlord on several occasions that the door has no grille."

"He'll probably send you in a bill for a new door!"

"That will be considerably cheaper than a coffin! The times we live in, Signor Ferring! It is to be hoped, if it comes to a crisis, that the supporters of the government in this street outnumber those who favor Spalanza!"

Scardovi drilled a hole in the door—a thing fully an inch in diameter; then, discovering that it was too far to the left to appear symmetrical, bored another, so spaced from the first that it permitted a person to employ both eyes at once.

At length he withdrew the tool and, turning to Ferring who leaned against the wall, called his attention to the masterpiece with a flourish of his hand.

In a space of seconds, while lights flash on and off, Pasqua, of the blue mantello, vanishes utterly, mysteriously, lost alike to lover and captor. How the latter, grim leader of "The Moving Finger," pits the strength of his sinister Camorra against her sweetheart's efforts to find her is told in succeeding episodes of Edmund Snell's "Knotted Cord" series.

On the evening of the third day following Alan Ferring's arrival at the flat in the Via Plana, the servant reported to her master that there was a stranger outside demanding admittance. Ferring sprang to his feet, but Scardovi pushed him back.

"Let me go. It will be well for you not to be recognized."

The lawyer had hardly reached the passage when he was in the room again, darting back with an alacrity that astonished Ferring.

"What's the matter?"

Scardovi laid a finger across his lips.

"Not too loud. I cannot see those two holes. Somebody is looking in."

The bell rang for a second time, an insistent summons accompanied by heavy kicks on the woodwork. Ferring stepped in front of his host and peered cautiously out. There was no window in the corridor and the only light that filtered through came from behind the Englishman. Suddenly he started violently. From one of the two holes a dark cord dangled and at its lower extremity he could just see what appeared to be a tassel, crumpled by

its transit through the orifice. As his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, he discovered that the cord was knotted in two places. He looked hard for the third knot, but was unable to distinguish it.

"Who are you?" he demanded in Italian.

"A friend."

"Whom have you come to see?"

"The Signor Alan Ferring."

"You have a message?"

"*Si, signore.*"

"Then push it under the door," advised Scardovi over Ferring's shoulder. "We open to nobody."

There was a brief pause and the voice came again.

"The message is in the box—and the box is sealed."

"*Morta la gallina!* This is no time for tomfoolery. You have full permission to break the seal."

A STRANGE thrill ran through Ferring. The sight of the knotted cord took his mind back to Pasqua, who in a few brief moments had become as dear to him as life itself. Meanwhile, the man outside was shuffling about on the stonework, evidently making up his mind.

"Very well," he conceded. "I have disconnected the box. I will push the cord through—and the letter after it."

The tasseled end dropped to the mat and something white took its place in the opening. Ferring stepped forward, one hand outstretched. A horrified shout from Scardovi sent him stumbling to his knees, as a blinding flash leaped through the second hole and something passed so close to his cheek that he felt the breath of its going. It buried itself in the wall at the far end of the passage and, before the lawyer could prevent him, Ferring had wrenched open the door—his ears still singing with the report—and brought the man who had been leaning against it staggering inward. The revolver was still in the stranger's hand, but, in the midst of his frantic effort at recovery, the Englishman's fist shot out. In quarters where Ferring was better known, it was whispered that a hit from him was like a horse's kick. The man sprawled helplessly and Scardovi kicked the weapon out of his reach before appropriating it.

Ferring shut the door and withdrew the paper. As he had half expected, it was a blank sheet. He picked up the cord. It was knotted in three places and of the color he had been told to expect. He looked up at his friend.

"Got any cord?"

Scardovi spread out his hands and Amalia—who was peering through the kitchen door—answered for him.

"*Ecco, signore!*"

She seized a length of line from somewhere close at hand and tossed it to Ferring. It was the first time he had read anything resembling approval in her eyes.

He knelt over the prostrate form, working silently and effectively, drawing the knots taut with his teeth. Presently he rolled it over and began searching the pockets. Suddenly he muttered something under his breath and scrambled to his feet, a wooden box between his fingers.

"What is it?" asked Scardovi breathlessly.

Ferring held it toward him, then ran his nail under the lid.

"There is blood on the back," insisted the lawyer, but the other was not listening. He held a creased sheet of paper to the light, whistling softly to himself as he read. Then he raised his head slowly.

"I am beginning to understand. Her messenger tried to get to me—and failed."

"There is blood on the box," said Scardovi again.

"I know. They must have knifed the poor fellow. Look, Scardovi; you'd better read this."

The lawyer took the paper into the sitting room.

"*Caro,*" the letter ran. "I have been betrayed. There was somebody in the restaurant who overheard. Spalanza knows everything. He has brought me to Alessandria. I cannot tell you what motive prompts him to do this; perhaps it is because you are here. I am imprisoned in Room 47 of the Trattoria San Pietro, Via Varese. The only other friend I have in the world besides you has contrived to speak to me and take you this. He will tell you all there is to know. If you care—come quickly. Pasqua."

Ferring came slowly through the doorway and took down the coat and hat that had replaced those purloined from Spalanza's chauffeur.

"I am coming with you," said the Italian.

The other shook his head.

"You are a wonderful man, Scardovi; but you've done too much already. Besides, there is the fellow outside to be watched until you can hand him over to the police."

"They will be waiting for you downstairs."

"I don't think so. We have probably secured the man detailed to watch the house. Anyhow, I'm taking my chance. Good-by. I'll let you know if I win through." He swallowed a lump in his throat. "I can't tell you how grateful I am for—everything."

Scardovi, following him out, asked, "You are armed?"

Ferring patted his pocket. The remainder of the coil of rope caught his eye and he took possession of it.

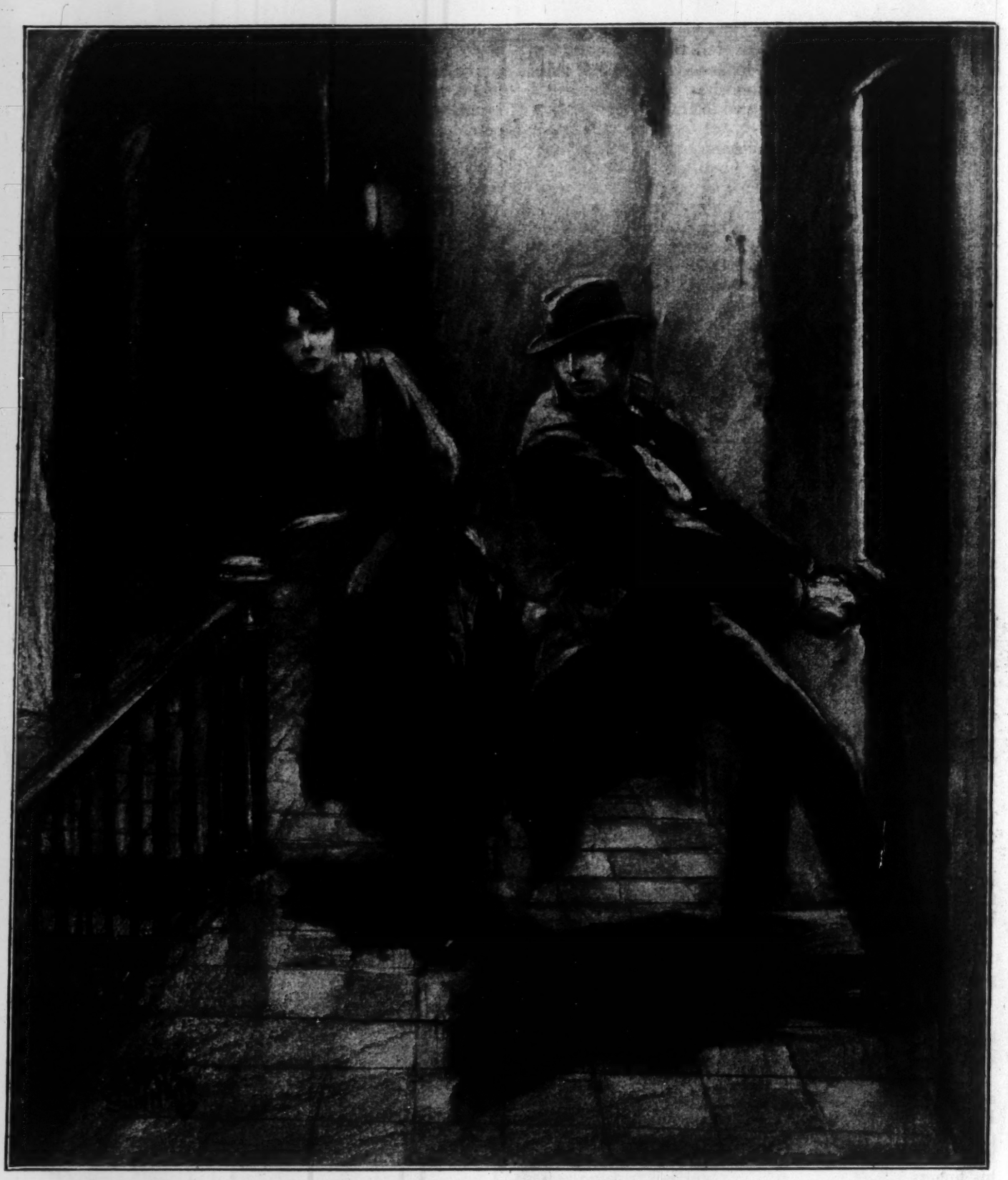
"Good-by, again."

Then the hall door slammed.

It was raining heavily when Ferring reached the street and a woman, her shawl drawn over her head, brushed past him. He was about to overtake her when he caught sight of the picturesque hat of a *carabiniero* on duty at a corner. The fellow proved genial enough and, by following his instructions, the Englishman found himself ten minutes later before the entrance of the Trattoria San Pietro.

There were tables outside, under a striped awning and, through a plate-glass window ornamented with advertisements in gilt lettering, Ferring saw Spalanza. The bearded giant sprawled in a corner, the inevitable cigar between his teeth, his green eyes fixed upon the buxom young woman who officiated at the plated coffee boiler. Ferring would have dearly loved to have picked him off where he sat—sniping him, with poetic justice, with his own revolver. There were no other women visible and the appearance of the remaining dozen or so occupants of the drinking house was not encouraging. The Englishman dived into a side entrance where a fellow in a greasy white shirt barred his path, at the same time crooking a grubby forefinger at him. Ferring, collecting his wits, remembered the Moving Finger and imitated the other's action. Ten seconds later the creature had vanished and the intruder was free to gain the staircase.

ROOM 47 was on the second floor, the number scrawled in chalk on a faded, blistered surface. He tried the handle. The door was locked. He tried the next with better success, and switched on the light. The room was unoccupied and he took the precaution of turning the key behind him. It was a small, bare apartment. There was a suit case on a chair at the foot of the bed upon which rested a pair of boots; a basin of dirty water on the washstand and a brown-velvet jacket hanging behind the door. This and the fact that the atmosphere was permeated with a smell of sickly sweetness brought him to his senses with a shock. It was



Ferring clutched at the doorknob with both hands, struggling against a force that was vastly superior to his own. "Rùn," he called back softly to the girl

Spalanza's room and the odor was that of the ghastly brand of cigars he persisted in smoking.

The sight of his own reflection in the mirror set him laughing. A queer Nemesis over which he could not hope to have control seemed to be forcing him to trifle with the faction leader's possessions. He felt himself revolving helplessly in the vortex of Italian political intrigue, without the faintest notion what the end of it all was to be.

He stepped through the window to a narrow balcony over which he obtained a view of the drenched roadway thirty feet below. He was aware of a sea of swaying umbrellas, sodden shawls, broad-brimmed hats; the soft, tinkling notes of a mandolin, and then a jagged, blinding streak illuminated the heavens, followed by a deafening peal of thunder, and somewhere a woman screamed. The rain, increasing in volume, cleared the street more effectively than [*Continued on page 120*]

Further Adventures of a Famous Explorer in the Heart of New Guinea

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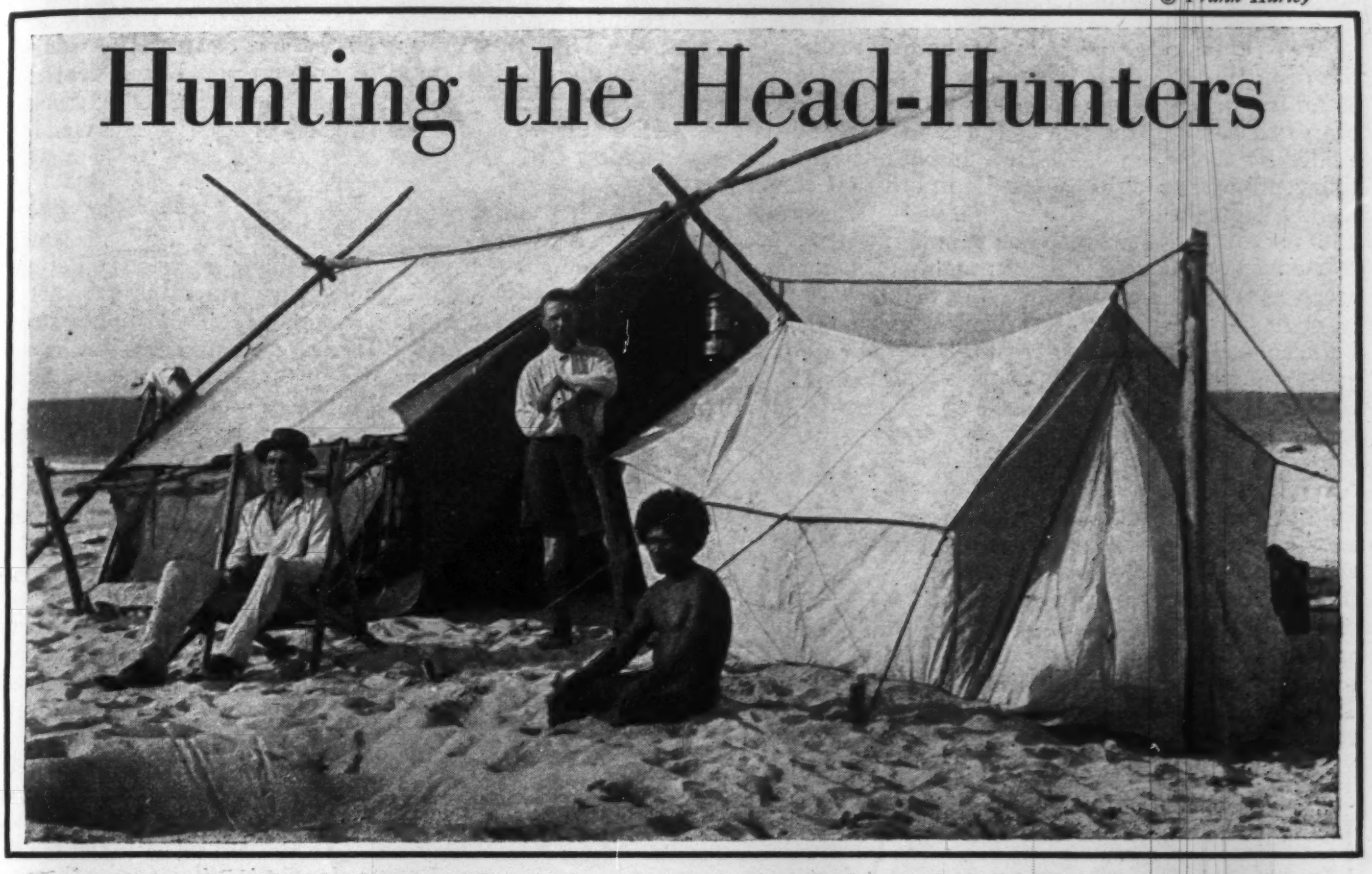
Hunting the Head-Hunters



Captain Hurley, Naturalist McCullough and Dogoda, the cook, returning from Fly River, visit the "shell-holed" sands at Bramble Cay. These excavations are the nests of myriads of huge turtles that lay their eggs here to hatch in the sun

By Captain Frank Hurley

AFTER our departure from the lake of the "Sambio" head-hunters we sailed down the Herbert and into the Fly River without further adventure. But today, as we approached Cassowary Island, I caught sight of a creek that interested me and I determined to explore it. Near its narrow entrance we discovered a village, which we hailed with the familiar cry of "*Sambio.*" A group of natives promptly appeared on the water front. They were extremely timid and for some time would not venture near. Eventually, however, they came out in a canoe and placed a present of fish on a pole, which they pushed upright into the shallow water some distance away from the *Eureka.*

I lowered the dinghy, rowed up to the pole and removed the fish, hanging presents in its place. But the natives were too frightened to venture near. Finally McCullough and I rowed toward them in the dinghy, whereupon they held out poles to receive the presents, being afraid to take them from us at close quarters.

They were large men, with pleasant features, but devoid of any noteworthy characteristics. As evening fell, I sailed the vessel out into deeper waters and dropped anchor for the night.

November 29th.

All through the night the village dogs kept up a blood-curdling howling that prevented me from getting much sleep. But we were not molested, except by the mosquitoes, which I am beginning to regard as worse enemies than all the head-hunters in Papua.

Anchor was heaved in at dawn and we sailed away after discovering that our native visitors of yesterday had cleared out during the night. They seem to be even more timid than the Lake Murray savages. They had left behind them a few bags of foodstuffs, and we surmise that their village is farther up the river, and this spot merely used as a camping ground. We selected what we required from the garden produce—an extremely small selection—and left knives and tobacco in payment. We then proceeded

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NO exploring expedition in years has attracted such intense interest as that led by Capt. Frank Hurley into the heart of unknown New Guinea.

McCLURE'S was able to publish last month Captain Hurley's own story of his discovery of a new tribe of head-hunters, as jotted down in his diary day-by-day. His concluding experiences among strange Papuan tribes are here described.

downstream and dropped anchor for the night off Cassowary Island, which we failed to visit on our upward trip.

December 3rd.

Two canoes came out from the shore this morning and the crews invited us to visit their houses in the village of Aduru, on the far bank. We promptly altered our course thither, towing one of the canoes behind us and guided by the other, in which a number of women were riding. I was much astonished to note that the canoe readily kept ahead of us, although we were making five knots and a heavy current was running.

As we approached Aduru a number of men came out in canoes to trade bananas. One stick of tobacco purchased two bunches of bananas. After lunch McCullough and I and several of the natives went ashore. We were greatly pleased to find the people tractable and well-disposed. The Hebraic cast was still apparent in their features and their hair was worn in small stiff curls which hung like a coarse mop.

I was astonished to find good order and comparative cleanliness in the village and a scarcity of mud. The three monster houses were built upon piles, remarkably well constructed, and approachable by rather a pretentious series of banistered steps. The largest of the houses measured 195 feet long by about 30 feet wide.

Within, a long hallway extended down the center with small cubicles on either side in which the individual families live. Fishing nets, bows and arrows, and the characteristic belongings of all Papuans—drums, pipes, etc.—hung from the roof and posts. The whole was orderly and clean. The women were smeared with mud on account of a recent death in their village and wore strange caps with long teaseled fibre hanging in tresses which increased their excessive ugliness.

December 4th.

On further acquaintance, we find the people of Aduru to be among the finest that we have yet met in Papua, as regards physique, looks and tractability. After luncheon we went ashore, the dinghy deep with cameras, men and benzine cans, all sorts of empty tins, beads, axes and tobacco—and expectations.

Not even among the archaic tribes by the dark waters of Lake Murray did we gaze upon such fantastic customs as those we saw today. Imagine us standing in the center of a ring of wild-eyed savages, with a fleet of great canoes tethered in the peaceful creek near by and, just behind, the mighty Fly gliding swiftly through the reeds. In front are the great houses raised on sticks with the occupants idling on the threshhold, looking down upon our doings. Smoke rises through the roofs, the chatter of the wild voices is all around and the very air is redolent with an aroma of mystery.

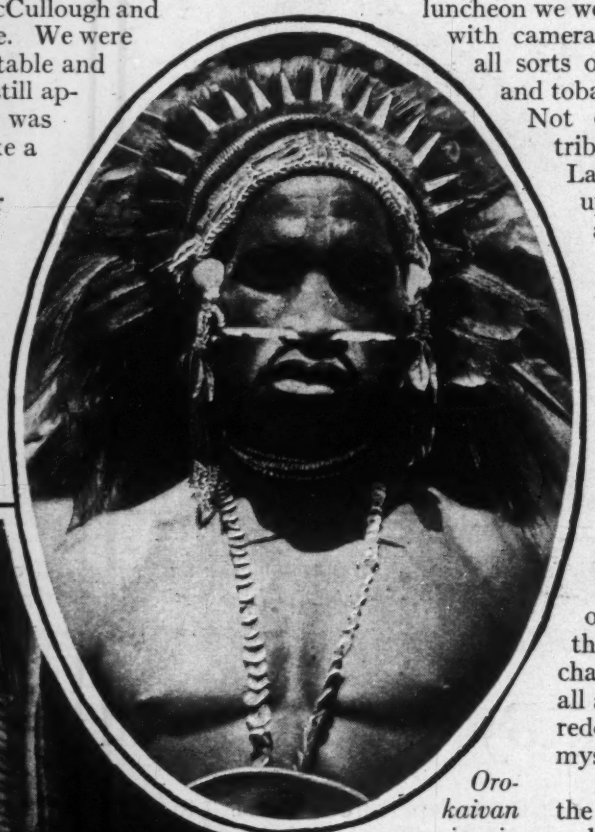
Along the narrow path by the creek we went, and up the rude steps, with a long wake of strange people following us and permitting us to go where we would without question.

We entered the small door of one of the houses—it takes a mighty stride for the doorstep is three feet high!—and were engulfed by an acrid smoky gloom, with phantom forms moving hither and thither and sunbeams sending their shafts through roof holes in silver pencils. As our eyes grew accustomed to the darkness we found ourselves in the midst of a weird scene. The phantom forms resolved themselves into hideous furies, hags and witches, moving among the great piles of bananas, smoked fish, sago and feast stuff.

Down the long gloomy corridor McCullough and I trod, those about us scarce heeding, for they were busy with the preparations of a funeral feast and nothing else mattered. For seventy yards we walked, pacing the great length and marveling at what we saw, peering into cluttered corners where amazing objects of native handicraft lay jumbled, and scarcely disturbing the lolling forms of men besmeared with the mud of mourning.

In this great house, all the families dwell on a

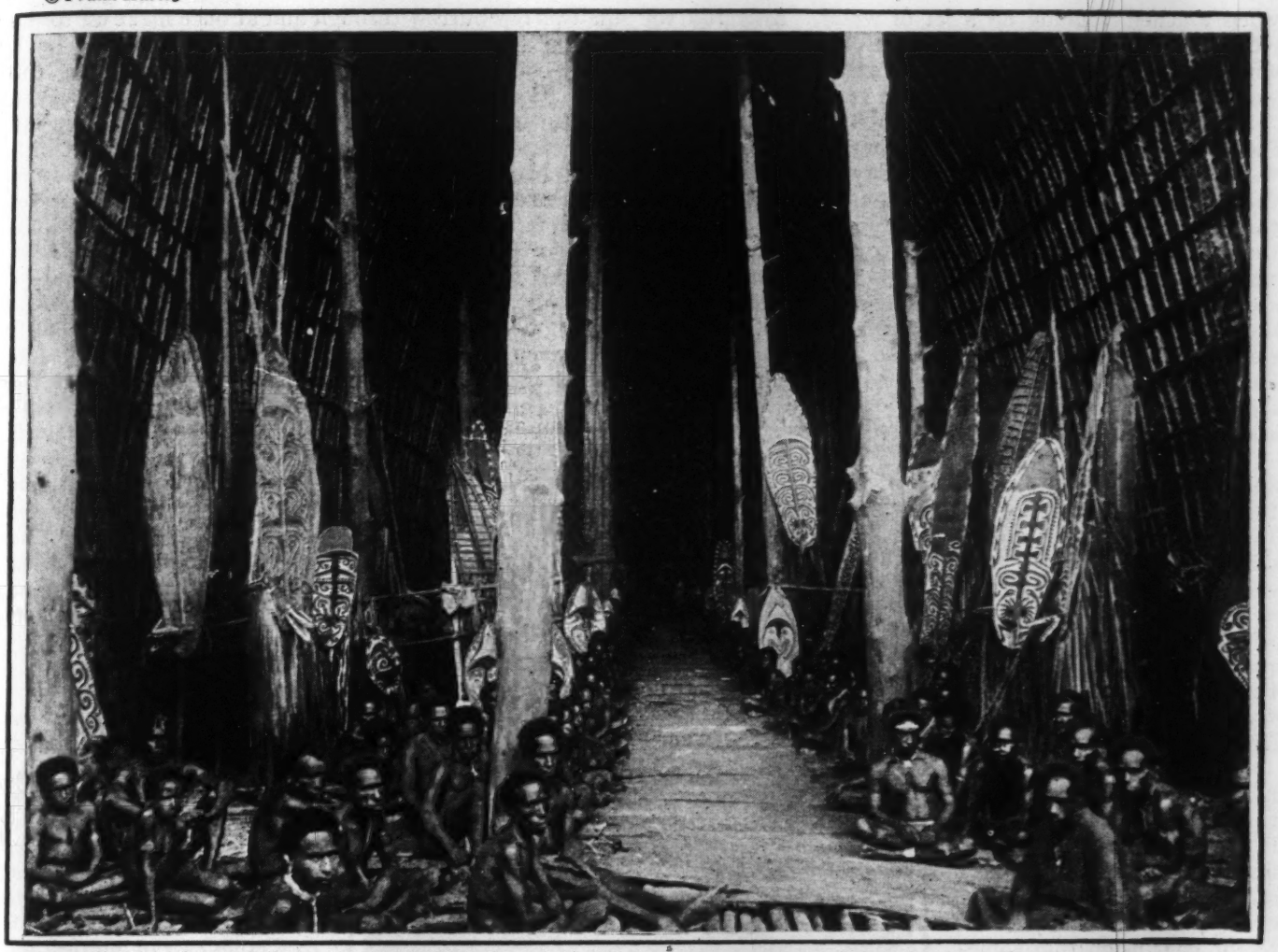
Photos © by Frank Hurley



Orokaivan warrior in full dress, which means simply a magnificent headdress and a few beads

Married men of Aramia. Their conelike caps are donned when they marry and are never thereafter removed

© Frank Hurley



Interior of one of the huge communal houses on the Fly estuary. It is five hundred feet long and eighty feet high and serves as clubhouse for the men. The women enter it only to bring meals to their lords and masters

common ground floor, with no walls between their cubicles. To record any impressions of this scene that no civilized being has previously viewed would be the realization of a dream, yet it seems beyond the power of lens and pen alike.

For photographic purposes, eventually we induced the women, or rather a number of them, to parade from one house to another—the death walk of the witches!—but the sun was low in the sky, cloud-banked, so that I am dubious of results.

December 15th.

For the past ten days we have been moving slowly down the Fly River, stopping at various villages and finding the people and customs of each more or less similar to those we noted at Aduru. Today we have sailed out of the Fly River and through storms and rain across the shoal waters to Bramble Cay, a sand-covered coral reef, some thirty miles off the estuary of the Fly River. Here McCullough, myself and Dogoda, the cook, will camp while the *Eureka* goes in to Daru to pick up supplies.

Two of the Lake Murray head-hunters study their photograph—upside down!

December 16th.

We pitched camp yesterday evening amid a straggling succulent vegetation, which we were later alarmed to find swarming with centipedes. This morning when I started to dress I found my clothing and shoes full of the loathsome and venomous creatures, while every box and package and every fold of the tent was swarming with them. These hideous vermin measured up to six inches in length, and deprived our camp of most of its allurement. I therefore struck camp and re-erected it on the clean coral beach a short distance away, for the centipedes cannot come over the sand.

At low tide, McCullough and I explored the eastern end of the reef, and to my great delight I found it rich with coral formations and marine life. Giant clams, measuring as much as three feet across, were in abundance, with widely gaping shells, which they "clopped" shut

when touched, sending up a jet of water. An unwary foot, caught between their jaws, can only be extricated with an axe, and many a pearl diver's skeleton lies under water among the reefs—victim of the vise-like grip.

During the night we were much interested in studying the habits of the monster turtles as they came ashore and watching them excavate nests and lay their eggs. The turtles evidently prefer to come ashore at high tide in the darkness and as we lay on the sand bank we watched them leaving the water and taking advantage of each wave to assist them to the beach. Their movements seemed extremely ungainly and laborious, which is not astonishing seeing that the uncouth reptiles, some three feet long, weigh over 400 pounds, and have only two flippers before and two small paddle-flippers behind to move themselves over the soft sand.

After every seven jerks ahead the unfortunate creatures had to stop for breath. I was amazed at the steepness of the grade which they can negotiate. The ground, or rather sand, is pitted as if with shell holes, through the continual nest-making, and the ungainly creatures would wallow into and out of them like tanks.

When the sand above high tide was reached, each turtle would begin to scoop it away violently with the fore flippers and thus "dig herself in." After much waste of energy, she evidently came to the conclusion that something was not quite right, so off she would go again, another dozen yards, and repeat the process. When a "crater" eighteen inches deep was flipped out, the front flippers rested and the after flippers began excavating. The sand was kicked forward alternately in violent jerks, but now only a comparatively narrow hole was being sunk for the reception of the eggs.

© *Frank Hurley*

A young woman of Vilirupu, wearing widow's weeds of fibre in mourning for her husband. Capt. Hurley calls her "the original grass widow"

We watched this great labor for half an hour when the capricious lady couldn't quite decide whether or not this was the best place, and she laboriously climbed out and paddled off to another spot. I am told, and have ample reason to believe, that the turtle makes these false nests so as to delude egg searchers and to mislead them as to the finding of the real site.

Still a third excavation was made, but we were again to be disappointed. Each of these efforts took at least half an hour and by the time the fourth hole was made over three tons of sand must have been shifted, and most of our patience exhausted.

When the eggs were all laid—to the number of 160!—the hind flippers carefully pushed the sand over them and then began a wonderful movement of kneading and compacting the sand. The front flippers threw back the sand, and inch by inch, interval after interval, effort after effort, the turtle slowly drew away from the nest. So well covered was the nest that the surface resembled the sand around. The sun's heat incubates the eggs and the small turtles burrow through and at once make off to the sea.

We captured eight of the large turtles during the night, by merely turning them on their backs, when the unfortunate creatures are completely helpless. The job is not easy, however, McCullough and I did our best with levers, fearing to grab hold of the flipper, a knock from which might easily break a man's wrist. The natives grab a flipper and by a deft movement heave the huge reptile over single-handed, a feat in which they have acquired skill through long practice.

December 18th.

The turtles which were turned over last night I made motion pictures of this morning to illustrate their peculiarities of movement. As soon as the turtle is righted it at once makes direct for the sea. If the turtle be turned away from the sea, it will invariably take the shorter route to the beach. McCullough and Dogoda mounted the backs of two turtles and their unique steeds carried them with little effort.

December 23rd.

Picked up by the *Eureka* two days ago, we have ever since been trying to reach the mouth of the Aramia River, but wind and tide and the feeble navigating powers shared by our engine and coxswain alike brought us to the Papuan Coast, some fifteen miles east of our destination. Today we decided to head for the Island of Goaribari. Our coxswain assured me of his "local knowledge," and, owing to the shallow nature of the waters and the intricate passages, I was forced to leave much of the navigation to this superior knowledge of his — "me savvy."

Sailing hour after hour and miraculously escaping mudbank after mudbank, we finally came to the island which he announced to be Goaribari. I marveled at its unusual growth since the chart was made. Finally he took us merrily up a great river with high hills in the background and I began to suspect that we were on the wrong stream. The coxswain admitted that "river and hill been all change and village all gone since he been come last!" A usual way of saying that we were in the wrong place. After much consultation, taking of bearings and use of imagination, I made out that we were at Morigio Island and in the estuary of the Turama River, fifteen miles beyond our objective.

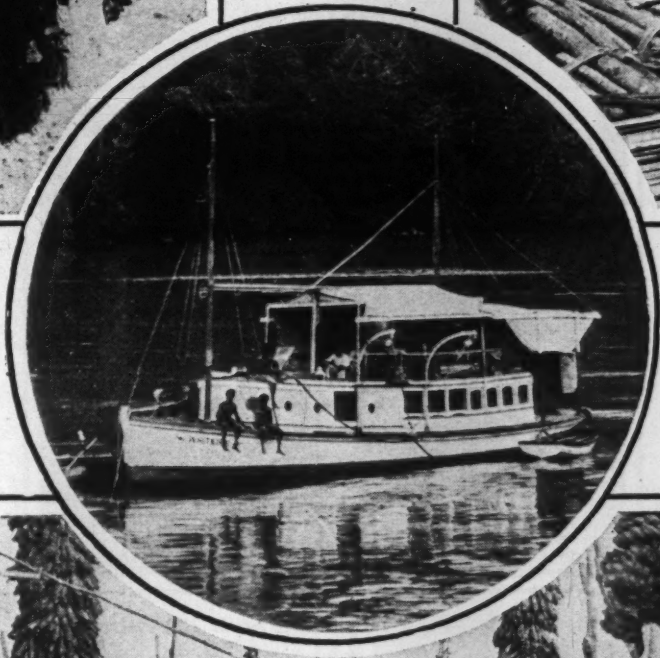
We turned back down the west side of Morigio Island, and at sunset came to anchor under the shelter of Bell Point. Scarcely were we moored before two canoes put out toward us, the larger being paddled by twenty men, who stood erect.

The tallest of the crew was frantically waving something, which through the glasses I made out to be a green bough, an emblem of peace. I waved back, what

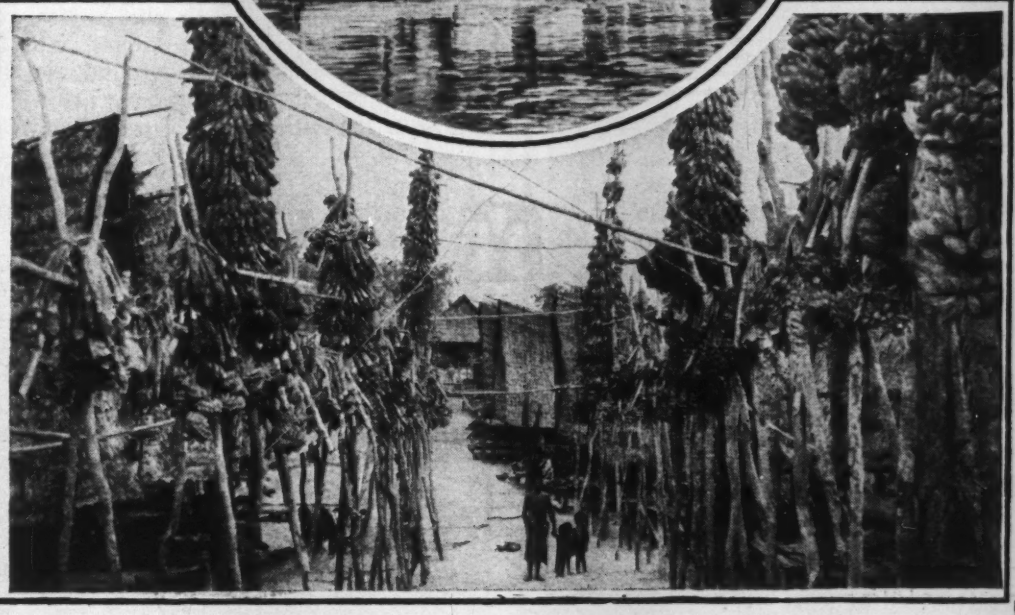
Photos © Frank Hurley

At left, a Papuan sub-deb, of Melanesian descent, who took great delight in posing and displaying her brilliant bouquet of poincianas

Above, a bowman of the Delta Country, Papua. The bow and the point of the reed arrow are made of flexible black palm wood. In the backround, Captain Hurley's vessel, the "Eureka"



At right, type of boat used by Captain Hurley to navigate the treacherous waterways that lead to Lake Murray. The native coxswain and cook admire the river scenery from the safety of the deck



A municipal market. Potatoes, yams, bananas and sago on display in the village a few days before a feast

under more civilized conditions would be regarded as the stand-off signal, warning of danger ahead—a large square of red calico.

Warily the canoes came alongside, with the most untamed-looking crowd I had seen since leaving Lake Murray.

The natives of Bell Point are regarded as head-hunters and cannibals. They are not big men, nor powerfully built, but their physiognomy is fierce, while their wild and woolly coiffures add to their sinister appearance. Somewhat resembling a mop, their hair is drawn back from a shaven forehead, and across the cranium is tied a queer fringe that extends from ear to ear, giving the appearance of a ridge of brush-like hair.

Despite their apparent ferocity, they proved to be jovial dirty creatures, which I suppose is not to be wondered at, as their troubles are small and their environment is mud, like that of most of the inhabitants of New Guinea.

December 24th.

Once again Christmas Eve finds me in an outcast place. What a string of memories and scenes comes to me as we sit on deck regarding the passing banks and villages of the Bamu River, and envy the very natives the companionship of their homes! Some, aye, most of these remembered Christmases were times of peril and hardship, but these are merely the corollaries of adventure and must be greeted as they come—else why venture?

December 25th.

We have been slowly ascending the Aramia River and today we drew up at a local village where I took on a local guide, knowing it would be difficult for us to find the Aramia villages which we have come far to visit. Selecting the cleanest and most likely-looking lad from the canoe load which had come out to look us over, I inquired through one of our crew if he was acquainted with the route to the Aramia villages, and also if he could pilot us there. His reply was simply to clamber on board and immediately start to work.

We at once proceeded, our new pilot in great ecstasy, singing his native songs and performing his native dances on the forecastle head.

December 26th.

The vegetation on the river banks hindered our progress greatly today, and we came to occasional grassy areas and floating islands similar to those which we encountered on the Fly. Eventually we observed quite an insignificant creek, up which our pilot turned. The creek looped and doubled back on itself so that for every mile we advanced we traveled at least five.

At length, from the masthead, I descried ahead a great lake or swamp, littered with myriads of grassy islets and with numerous isolated eminences rising 20 to 25 feet above the water. Everything was verdant and deeply covered with grass. Scarcely a tree was to be seen on the landscape, which was dotted here and there with large grass-thatched dwellings, like barns, erected on the ridges and resembling English farmhouses in a rural setting. It was hard to believe that the scene before us existed in the heart of tropical Papua.

No time was lost in launching the dinghy and proceeding toward one of the villages known as Urado. We passed through a perfect maze of passages, and here I found our pilot more than ever useful. He had been here previously with a native dancing party!

The village people were of medium stature, pleasant of countenance and hospitably inclined. Most wore strange conical-shaped hats, which they place on the head when married and never remove. The hair grows into and is woven through the mesh of the cap—surely a most embarrassing encumbrance.

© *Frank Hurley*

A Papuan sunset as seen through the entrance of a large communal house

The village itself consisted of a single large communal house, built on the crest of one of the rises. It was encircled by a well laid out garden, notable for its cleanliness. It seemed strange to fall in with a comparatively highly developed and æsthetically inclined people dwelling amid such an environment—on the shores of a swamp in the heart of New Guinea.

The house, which we were invited to enter, was a still more remarkable edifice; and though not as big as others we have visited, was undoubtedly the finest native construction that we have seen. The timbers used were solid and unwieldy and the framework, though merely lashed with cane and vines, was perfectly rigid. The floor was built up on piles about six feet high, and the roof from the ridge extended in an arched curve clear to the ground, making a large apartment below, which is used for storing and working in. The roof by this method also forms the side walls. It is thatched with sago palm leaves and is perfectly water-tight.

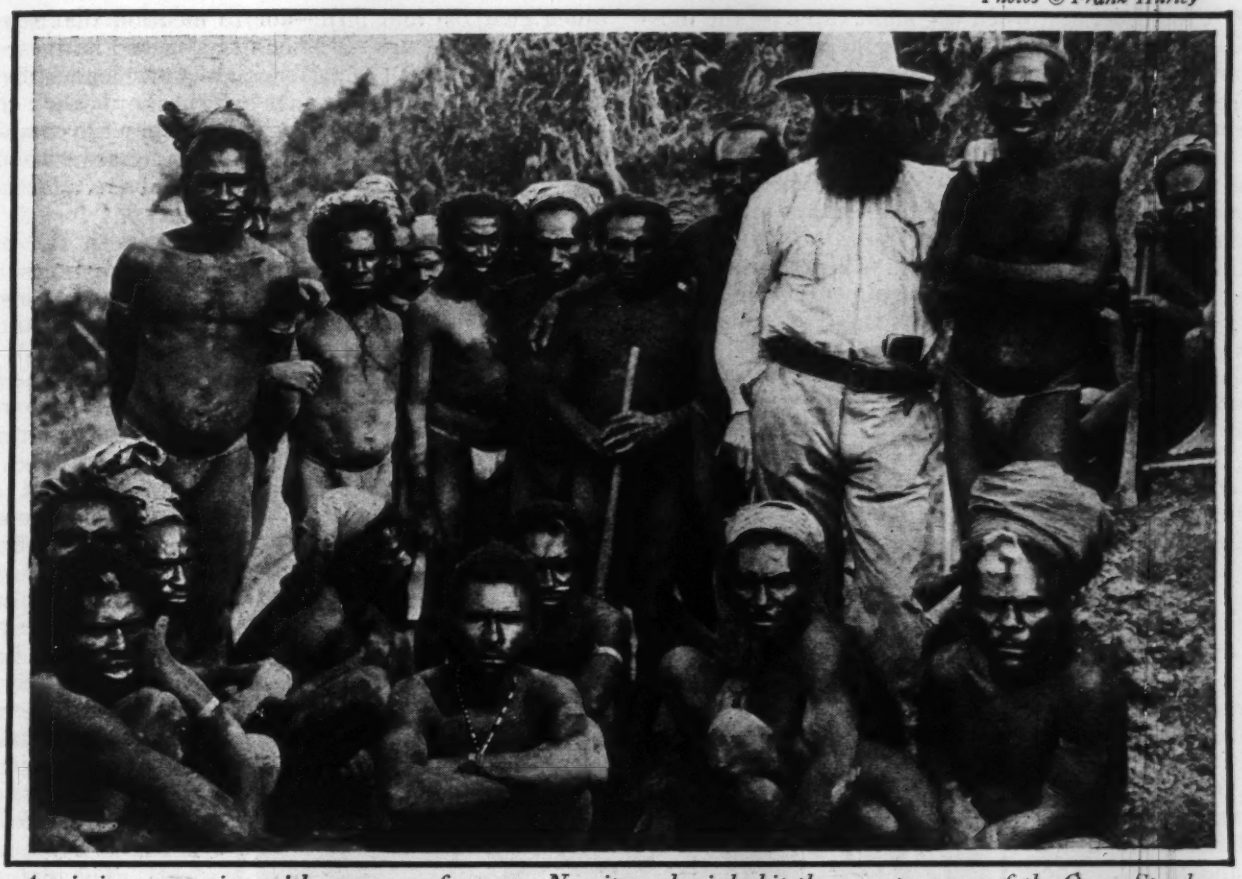
Inside, around a central hall were rows of cubicles, formed by the outward curve of the roof and the inner wall. A narrow gallery ran down either wall, five feet above the main floor and from it openings led into these cubicles, which are the dwelling places of the women and children. Above this narrow gallery notched logs led up into the "attic" where a staging was placed on the rafters. This is the men's sleeping place.

"Fireplaces" were on the main floor, being just the conventional slab of mud on which small logs were placed. The smoke filled the house, but it drove out the mosquitoes and was less annoying than the insects.

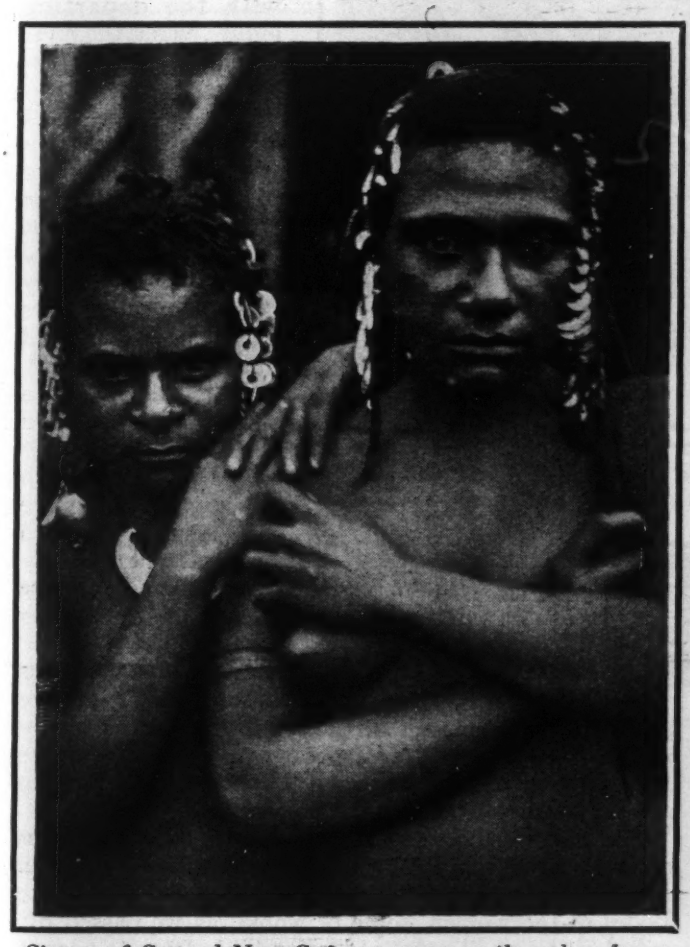
December 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th.

We encamped for a day or two on the shore near the Aramia village of Totani. I have been extremely hard

Photos © Frank Hurley



A missionary posing with a group of pygmy Negritos who inhabit the remote spurs of the Owen Stanley Ranges. These diminutive people are quite lacking in the love of adornment that characterizes their neighbors of the riverlands



Sisters of Central New Guinea pygmy tribes that have taken refuge in the mountains where they live in constant dread of hostile neighbors

Girls of the Evesi Mountain tribes, timid and elusive as fawns. Though full grown, these tiny women are scarcely four feet high

put to it for time, and when the night came on the mosquitoes were so severe as to preclude my writing or doing anything beyond getting under the net.

The day prior to leaving we succeeded in persuading the women to pose. Those natives who had conspicuously assisted us brought their wives before the all-seeing eye of the camera. The ladies were extremely shy and nervous, clinging to their husband's hands and shivering violently.

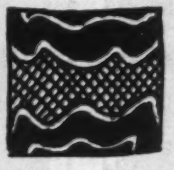
I did not consider that the latter was at all surprising since their chief article of raiment, besides a very few wisps of grass, was a coarse net which was worn completely over the head.

Glancing back over my notes on our visit to the people of Aramia, I see that I omitted to mention the probable reason for building the houses so solidly. The great strength of construction and the novel floor plan are adopted for defense, so that the house can be used as a fortress against hostile invaders. With doors barred, such edifices will readily withstand attackers using bow and arrow. The etiquette of cannibal warfare here forbids setting a house on fire, no matter how cruel the other details may be.

Through an interpreter, one old man told me how his wife and son and twelve others were massacred by a tribe of wild bushmen, in the thicket just beyond the house, their bodies being carried off for the feast. He caused several of the young men to illustrate how the attack was made, I being the imaginary victim. The strange dance and noise were indeed demoralizing as they jazzed around me in close formation with bows drawn ready to shoot. When they were within a few yards of me, they slipped the bowstrings from the arrows with a most inspiring twang. Had it not been for my confidence that the affair was play-acting, I should have shot them in self-defense.

© Frank Hurley

Native manikin displaying her latest creation, a strikingly decorated tapa cloth gown, made by the modistes shown on the opposite page



January 3rd.

We have sailed back down the Aramia and yesterday evening anchored near the village of Kerowa. I was grieved to observe this morning that a dancing party, which made last night hideous with its uproar, was breaking up, the dancers leaving the place in their canoes for adjacent villages. They were intensely pictorial in their feathery plumes and paint—but more so at a distance. Close inspection displayed grease, soiled feathers and much charcoal and filth—not to mention that strongly pungent and repugnant smell of unwashed natives.

The natives of Goaribari are conspicuous by the amount of ornate trappings which they wear, chiefly made from shells, and I must admit they are competent in the art of display. No Goaribari is dressed without his leggings which fit the calf tightly and are adorned up the front with two rows of small shells.

The women load their arms with the highly valued armlet shells and adorn the breast with shapely crescents cut from the mother-of-pearl shells. This treasured ornament, which can only be afforded by the well-to-do, is suspended by a string round the neck. They wear also many-rowed necklaces of beads and band their shaven crowns in a manner that must be a sore encumbrance. The women are not as ugly as those of the Fly and a few—a very few — might be regarded as comely.

From the vessel we had an admirable view of the long house, which extends along the river bank for no less than five hundred feet! The flat space between the river and the house was abustle with the departing guests, while the river was animated with returning canoes.

When we went ashore we were confronted with groups of skulls impaled on posts facing the river. These gruesome objects were tastefully decorated with ruffles of palm leaves rolled into scrolls at the end, which maintained a shivering movement in the breeze. The skulls were provided with very long noses, more like long beaks, and the eye sockets were filled with clay eyes ornamented with small red seeds. The skulls were painted with ruddle and were indeed grinning caricatures of death.

We were extremely fortunate in observing this display, for usually such treasured belongings are hidden in the fastnesses of the long house and are only brought out on ceremonial occasions, or to display to visitors the valor of the village. They appeared to me to indicate rather a warning than hospitality.

Beyond the long house we were shown numerous irregular groups of smaller houses, similar in external construction to the long house itself. These are the abodes of the women, some of whom, as we passed by, coyly left the small porticoed verandas in front to peer at us from within through cracks and crevices. Most, however, remained where they sat, smiling and gossiping

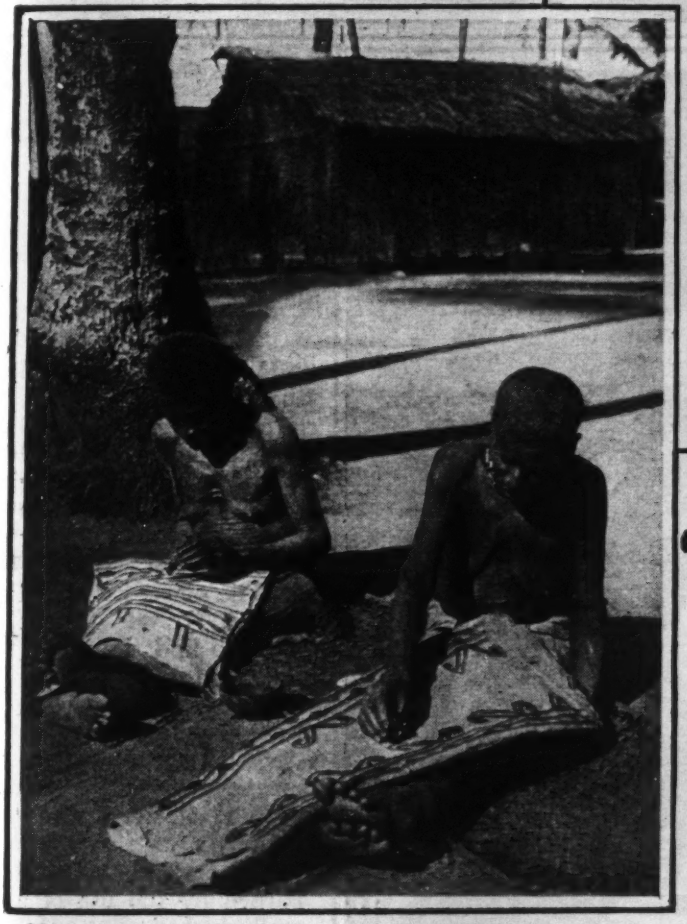
Photos © Frank Hurley

among themselves as we passed. The wives of all the male members of a family dwell in one house and family life as we understand it does not exist.

Gaining permission from one of the men who chanced to be visiting his wife's house, we entered one of these dwellings. We found so much impedimenta dangling from the roof that it was necessary to proceed bowed double. A narrow hallway, with cubicles on either side, extends the length of the structure to an exit at the opposite end.

The long house is in effect a great clubhouse for the men, where the warriors loll about in luxurious ease. Here in the smaller domestic establishments the fires burn smokily, and the women are constantly busy, kneading sago, mixing it with mashed bananas and rolling the mixture into sausages with outer coverings of leaf. These they lay on the embers and bake. I could not bring myself to sample this staple diet of theirs—it smelt too much like burnt glue.

Native women manufacturing cooking utensils. These are made of clay and shaped by holding a round stone against the inside and patting the outer surface against it. The pots when finished are sun dried and baked



Old women artists decorating tapa cloth, which is made by beating into a thin sheet the fibrous bark of the wild mulberry

A remarkable example of native ingenuity—fishing net made of fibres from leaves of the pandanus palm, shown on page 62

On the walls were fish traps and nets, while from the roof hung inverted cornucopias woven from fibre, which I was informed were used as receptacles for sago. The women here are bought like merchandise, and become slaves to the indolent males. When the food is cooked the women carry it to the long house where their hungry lords await. We visited several of these hives of industry and always found the women busy and leading what we would regard as lives of slavery.

January 4th.

I saw little now to interest me ashore and with the outflowing tide we left Kerowa with few regrets.

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Above, natives pounding out the pithlike interior of the sago palm. The pith is then washed to extract the starch, or sago, which is one of their staple foods

At left, a father instructing his son in the art of grinding a stone adz. Note how he uses his foot as a third hand—a frequent native practice

Anchor was again dropped at Dopima, a village notorious as the place where two missionaries, the Reverends Chalmers and Tomkins, were said to have been killed and eaten—a fate that we had agreed we ourselves would avoid.

We didn't go ashore—though the people are said to be peaceful enough now—owing to the vast expanse of low-tide mud, and with the change of the tide we again pushed on.

We are now heading for the Urama villages, through a maze of waterways made glorious by the silvery moonlight and the black silhouetted banks.

January 5th.

We continued toward the river's mouth and, after having progressed for a few hours, I noticed a new long house facing a beach on our way, so McCullough and I went ashore.

The place was called Ba-bai. It was a great relief to find the village free from mud. The inmates of the long house were all idling, except a few old men who were making arrowheads. This process was extremely interesting as the points were being shaped and barbed by the use of a mollusk shell.

There was a particularly fine skull shrine near the entrance to this

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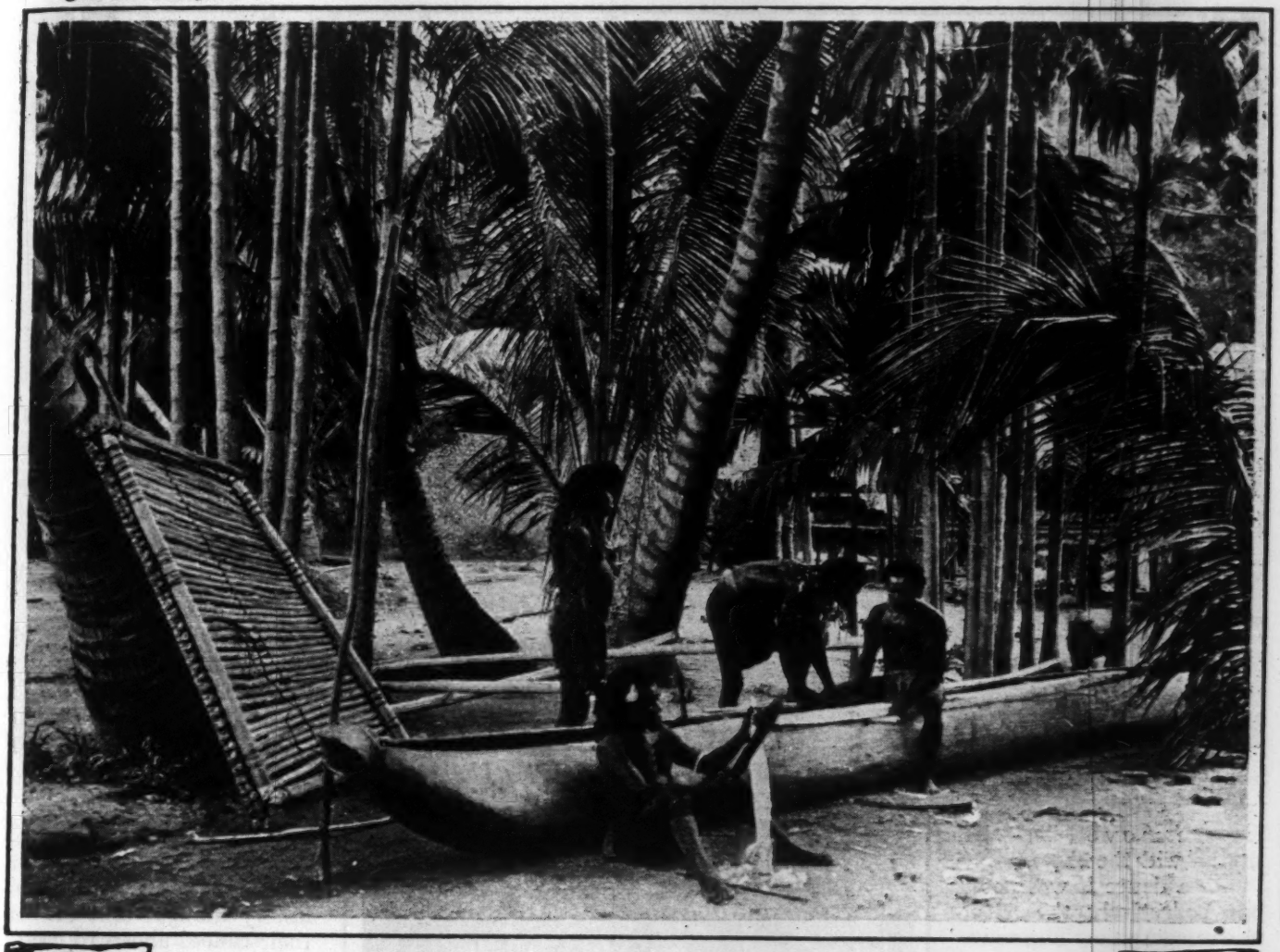

Northeastern Papuans excavating one of their marvelous canoes from the trunk of the Ilima tree, their only tools being the crude, primitive stone adz. The outrigger and deck are lashed on with vines

long house, and I tried every possible ruse to secure it precisely as it stood, but the natives refused our most lavish offer of tobacco, rice, armshells and knives.

I was able at least to film the making of the arrow-heads and also to catch a bevy of Ba-bai beauties enjoying my lady nicotine. Their pipe, or "bau-bau," is a long cylinder made from bamboo. One end is left open, and the other plugged. Near the sealed end a cigarette is inserted in a hole and the air is drawn in from the far opening. This charges the cylinder with smoke. The person whose duty it is to perform this function rarely inhales the smoke, but, as soon as the pipe is full, hands it around the smoking circle, after removing the cigarette. The smoke is inhaled through the small hole, one or two puffs sufficing for each smoker!

January 6th.

At lunch we dropped anchor off Kinomere and Toyei —two Urama villages pictorially situated on the banks of a small tidal creek.

Near the dubu, or men's clubhouse, I noticed down on the mud a rude shade shelter where a dozen large canoes were under excavation. All had advanced to about the same stage and it appears as if the work proceeds by stages and spasmodically.

Before returning to the ship, I arranged with the head of the village, who bears the name of Coir, to stage a dance the next day. As I fell asleep, I could hear Coir's voice haranguing the villagers and ordering all the women to clear out at daybreak.

January 7th.

Almost at break of day, the obedient spouses left the village in canoes and went "bush." The dance, which the men were going to perform, must not be seen by woman or child.

The village was all abustle, every one putting on feathers, shell adornments and decorating with ruddle. I lost no time in going ashore. At the landing stage a crowd, wonderfully made up, formed and a guard of honor conducted us through the village to the dubu.

A great commotion of dances and chanting was going on inside. The chant was led by the dancing chief, who piped in a highly pitched falsetto, then the whole assembly of dancers took up the theme in chorus. It sounded just like a teacher and a kindergarten and it was difficult to realize that the voices were those of grown men.

Let us see what is going on within. Up the notched stick that serves as a stepway to the platform and then beneath the small door into the gloom. Ye gods! What a stupendous and uncanny sight for civilized whites to be looking upon! A couple of hundred dancers arranged in long lines down the length of the hallway, the light from the doorway glinting on decorations and glistening eyes; the diffused half-light faintly shows up the setting of grotesque masks, while the eyeless sockets of the skull racks are the only beholders besides McCullough, myself and the interpreters.

Anxious to impress his audience, the leader pitched forth a few discordant tenor notes into the gloom. The drums boomed, the massed voices chorused and each

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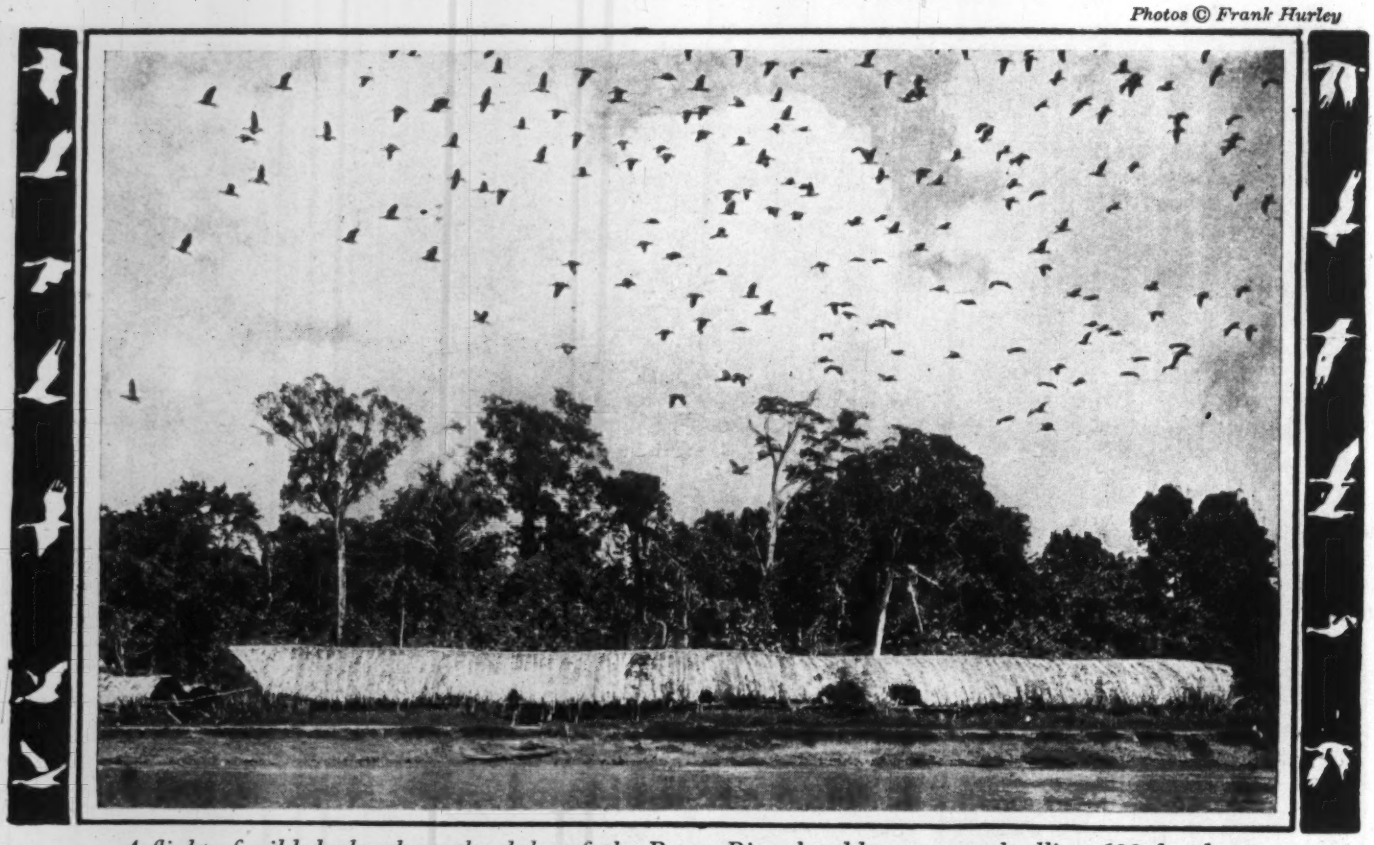


A flight of wild ducks above the dubu of the Bamu River head-hunters—a dwelling 600 feet long

figure moved in rhythm with the whole.

As a dance it was poor, but collectively the effect was remarkable. The white feathers, hinged to sway with each movement of the head, danced, the head-dresses of cassowary danced, the plumes danced—even the house jigged so that each movement gave us alarm lest the floor might collapse. The eerie gloom of the dubu and its dark recesses enhanced the impression of weird savagery.

Here we were, indeed, in the midst of another world, inhabited by strangely primitive people. It was as though we had sailed back magically into prehistoric times and were witnessing a ceremony enacted by our ancestors in the gloomy dawn of human life on earth.

January 10th.

Daybreak and full tide enabled us to pass over the shallow bank by the village and take a shorter route by way of a narrow tidal creek to Port Romilly and thence to Kaimari.

Although it was scarcely light our friends, the dancers of yesterday, collected along the water front to wave farewell, and in kindly thought sent one of their canoes ahead to guide us through the winding passage.

The creek through the bush was extremely beautiful in the morning light; the tall mangroves and the nipa palm lining the banks with dark walls of vegetation and filling the waters with dancing velvet shadows. Creeks ramified in every direction and deep were my inclinations to remain longer to explore them. But the days allotted to my expedition have come to an end.

In a few hours we reached Kaimari creek—where a few short months ago we made many take-offs in the sea-plane—and shortly anchor was dropped by our original site near the village of Kaimari. Thus I have come to the end of one more odd adventure in a life made up of many. Soon I will be back in civilization—and doubtless longing again for the thrill of the explorer's life in remote, untraveled fastnesses of this still mysterious globe of ours.

Pandanus palms along a mountain trail. From the leaves of these trees the natives manufacture cloth

The Light that Prevailed

Victory in a Woman's Words and the Glow of a Miner's Lamp

By Ethel Comstock Bridgman

Illustrations by Joseph A. Maturo

DUSK. The blaze of an open fire gave to Mrs. Lincoln's den an uncertain illumination—enough, however, to satisfy the mood of the woman who sat alone. She was looking fixedly at a small object on a table beside her, insignificant enough in itself—a battered miner's lamp.

Dusk turned to darkness. The fire blazed on. Impulsively the woman reached for the lamp. She handled it passionately at first, her fingers closing over it as if in prayer, then gently with immense tenderness. The firelight threw strange shadows on her face, revealing strong emotions—spent.

A maid entered softly.

"The evening paper, Mrs. Lincoln. Shall I make a light?" The girl looked wonderingly at the small lamp, hesitated, her round face betraying simple bewilderment.

"Thank you, Jennie, I have light enough—all I need."

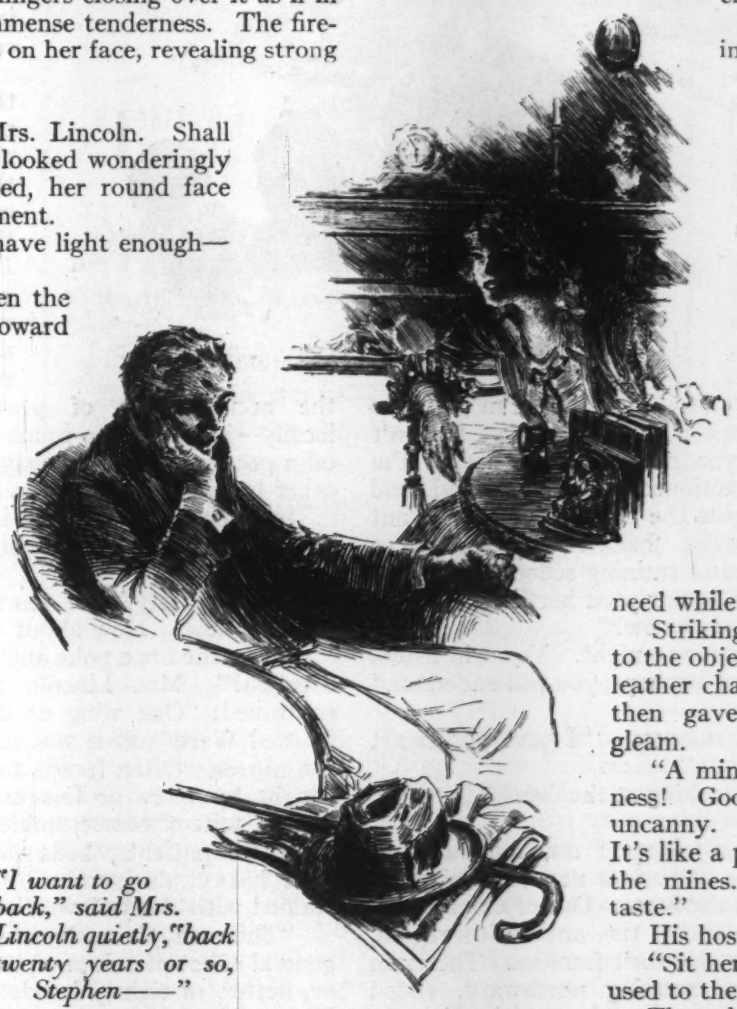
Mrs. Lincoln spread open the evening paper and bent toward the light of the fire.

PENNSYLVANIA WOMAN'S CIVIC LEAGUE PLEDGES SUPPORT TO MINERS' PROTECTION BILL

MRS. RICHARD LINCOLN, STATE CHAIRMAN, DESERTS PARTY

"Deserts party!" The woman laid the paper down. Election Day was six weeks off. The Miners' Protection Bill, providing a new style of safety powder kegs, an enlarged safety patrol and a series of thoroughly equipped mine emergency stations, had aroused unprecedented discussion throughout the anthracite region. Supported by labor and by many conservatives, opposed by a powerful machine which was controlled by the operators, it bid fair to split both of the major parties.

The Woman's Civic League, a non-partisan organization, was expected to vote as a unit and, in all probability, would decide the issue. Governor, state senators and assemblymen were pledged for and against the bill. This organization of women, inspired by the ardor, swayed by the magnetism of its chairman, had that afternoon voted to push through the party ticket which backed the bill. Mrs. Lincoln had previously scorned this party. The stand of the League meant an overwhelming blow to the operators.



"I want to go back," said Mrs. Lincoln quietly, "back twenty years or so, Stephen——"

The telephone rang sharply. Mrs. Lincoln had expected the ring. Stephen North, powerful mine operator, zealous upholder of her own political party, stanch friend as well, spoke briskly.

"That you, Ruth? This is Stephen. In heaven's name, what's this you're doing, deserting our party, monkey-wrenching our efforts to oppose that fool bill, ruining us financially! Great Scott, Ruth, have you gone crazy?"

"I've saved this evening for you, Stephen," answered the woman. "Come about eight. I want to talk to you."

"I'll be there." The telephone clicked savagely.

Promptly Stephen North arrived, big, blustering, pompous. He was ushered into the cozy upstairs den, dark except for the dull red glow of the open fire. Ruth Lincoln rose to meet him.

"Wait, Stephen," she said. "Don't press the button. There will be all the light we need while we have our talk."

Striking a match, she applied it to the object on the table by the big leather chair. The wick spluttered, then gave forth a small, yellow gleam.

"A miner's lamp and this darkness! Good heavens, Ruth! It's uncanny. It gives me the creeps. It's like a plunge into the bowels of the mines. Too realistic for my taste."

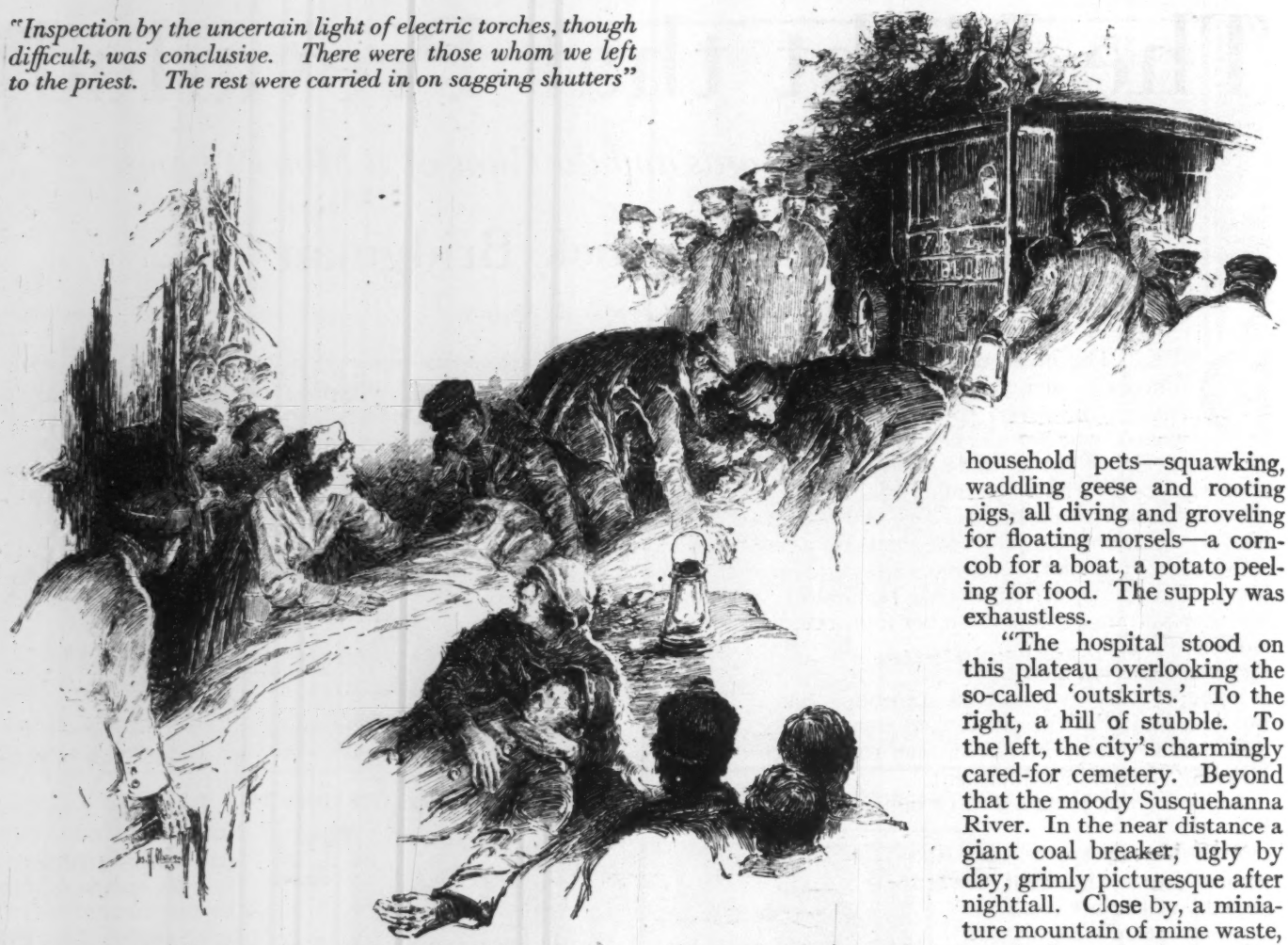
His hostess smiled.

"Sit here, Stephen. You'll grow used to the light."

Then the man exploded.

"I just can't believe it. *You* to whom we as a party, as a group of influential men, had looked for intelligent backing! *You* to whom these addle-pated women turned for guidance! There's some misunderstanding somewhere." He seated himself by the little tin, long-spouted lamp. "Come, now, let's straighten things out. It's possible that you don't understand the situation as I thought you did. The utter absurdity of the necessity for such a bill, the enormous expense involved. It's purely hysterical on your part. In the first place——"

Mrs. Lincoln laid her hand gently on her friend's arm. "We've disagreed before, Stephen," she said, "and



"Inspection by the uncertain light of electric torches, though difficult, was conclusive. There were those whom we left to the priest. The rest were carried in on sagging shutters"

you've always heard me out. This time I'm going to ask you to listen to a chapter in my own life. It won't take long. After that you may decide whether I'm hysterical or not." She motioned to the cigars and held up the miner's lamp to give the man a light. "I want to go back," she said quietly, "back twenty years or so to those days in the hospital training school——"

"Come, come, Ruth," interrupted her listener. "In heaven's name, why reminisce now?"

"But that is my story for to-night. You will listen, won't you, Stephen? Later, perhaps, you will understand me better."

"Sob-stuff," muttered the man. "I gave you credit for better sense."

But Mrs. Lincoln was looking at the fire.

"I DON'T think I ever told you much about that hospital," she began. "It was not very big, not widely known throughout the State. One of a number of city hospitals scattered about the anthracite region, catering largely to miners and their families. The main street of the small city, running northward, ended abruptly in a sort of plateau, then dumped itself, so to speak, down a steep hill and dwindled off into a disgraceful, oozy mass of soggy bogland fringed about with a scattering of unattractive frame houses—homes of miners.

"A valley of mire covered here and there with oily, iridescent pools of thickly running water wending their slimy way among heaps of tin cans, twisted pieces of rusty metal, carrying along in their sluggish course discolored rags, bits of refuse, garbage. It was the children's playground. Here waded indiscriminately, yet happily, hordes of diminutive, unclean Slavs, Lithuanians and Poles, along with their assorted line of household pets—squawking, waddling geese and rooting pigs, all diving and groveling for floating morsels—a corncob for a boat, a potato peeling for food. The supply was exhaustless.

"The hospital stood on this plateau overlooking the so-called 'outskirts.' To the right, a hill of stubble. To the left, the city's charmingly cared-for cemetery. Beyond that the moody Susquehanna River. In the near distance a giant coal breaker, ugly by day, grimly picturesque after nightfall. Close by, a miniature mountain of mine waste, the accumulation of years—'cullum banks,' called locally—in reality, so much slake and smut, but giving off a peculiar redness through the night. Farther away, other breakers—other culm heaps."

Stephen North hitched impatiently. His was not a poetic soul. For him the world was one of dollars and cents.

"Very pretty," he remarked sarcastically. "Very lovely indeed. How about this business of the bill?"

"Give the fire a poke and put on another log, will you, Stephen?" Mrs. Lincoln asked abruptly. Then she continued: "One wing of our hospital was called the Burned Ward and it was not the most popular among the nurses. Often it was full—full of mutilated wrecks caught by more or less unavoidable mine explosions. Special suits of coarse, unbleached muslin were provided for these patients, beds without linen, equipped only with heavy, dark-colored blankets, clean but thickly stained with the yellow of picric acid.

"The men, themselves, many of them, presented the general effect of exhumed humans in bifurcated shrouds or, better, of tightly hooded members of the Ku Klux Klan. Lint masks, supplied with eye, nose and mouth holes, covered their faces, these masks held in place by cap-shaped head bandages. Their hands were useless things, bulky, shapeless. Often they were delirious, always restless, throats parched, clamoring piteously for drink. 'Vader, sister——Missus, vader, please.' Greatest of all sufferers, helpless, patient, grateful.

"You see, Stephen, as nurses, we were taught that burns, no matter how superficial, if involving one-third of the body surface, would most certainly prove fatal. It means the destruction of one of nature's two methods of throwing off impurities. The kidneys, speaking plainly, cannot do all the work. It was no uncommon

experience to admit an injured miner, cheerful, displaying burns of an all too generous nature. 'Me fine, missus. Go home soon.' It would be the same old story. High spirits giving way to anxious, worried frowns, restlessness, delirium, stupor, death. And, through it all, the endless changing of stiffly clinging dressings, the forcing of liquid through jagged mask-slits. Ceaseless moaning for relief from scorched throats and swollen tongues.

"I've been giving you atmosphere, Stephen, local color. Now I come to my real story.

"I WAS on eight-hour duty—a system then in practice, too complicated to explain, so unsatisfactory that I hear it has since been abolished. I mention it only because of the fact that the three shifts involved—seven-thirty morning, three-thirty afternoon and eleven-thirty at night—gave me opportunity to study at close range the faces of the alternate shifts of miners, many of whom filed by my window in the Nurses' Home. A strangely silent lot of men they were, quite unlike the usual group of laborers, foreigners mostly, faces black, eyes blinking unaccustomed to the sun, with an unlighted lamp, like that one there, stuck in the front of each stiff-visored miner's cap. Undersized breaker boys, too, their narrow shoulders bent from the monotonous task of coal picking.

"It was May. I had gone to sleep early that evening, dog-tired, still too young in the nursing field to throw off entirely the miseries of the Burned Ward where my work lay.

"A hand on my shoulder woke me. The voice of the assistant night superintendent came from nowhere in particular.

" 'Report to the Burned Ward at once,' she said, in tones as crisp as her starched white uniform. 'There has been an explosion in the Hellencast Mine—a bad one. They're bringing the men here—I don't know how many. You are to take charge. I'll send you one nurse and a probationer. Spread lint rapidly—a lot of it—until they come. Only hurry.'

"My watch said ten-twenty. Why couldn't they have let me have my sleep out! I fumbled with my uniform. The straps in the back. What an ungainly outfit! No need to light the gas. The room was full of that dull red light from the near-by culm bank. Beside the glowing heap rose the breaker, grim and forbidding against a starlit sky.

" 'Poor fellows!' I thought.

"The other two nurses joined me in the yard outside and, together, we speculated on what was in store. No one could supply many facts. The word had come over the telephone from the night superintendent of one of the largest mines just outside the city limits. We gathered that the explosion had been terrific, that many had been killed outright, that many were dying and that others—an unknown number—were being brought to us.

"A single gas jet, turned low, burned dismally in the main corridor just outside the swinging door of the Burned Ward. Inside the ward there were, fortunately, a number of empty beds, their mattresses covered with rubber sheeting. The dim light revealed white forms, oddly magnified, stretched on other beds. Through the masks came heavy breathing, smothered, stertorous. Eyeholes showed black and cavernous. There were no eyes. The heat and odor were sickeningly oppressive. Air must be kept from burns and dressings should not be changed too often. 'Vader, missus——Vader, please!'

"Intensely we worked, unrolling, cutting lint, spreading it with spatulas of cool, thick vaseline. A sleepy interne looked in on us, grumbling. This wasn't his job. Where was Leighton? Time he was in. Second dirty trick he'd played that month. Then an orderly arrived, important, pert, interrupted in an informal diet-kitchen meal, part of a fried-egg sandwich clutched in a none too immaculate hand. Sometime after midnight young Doctor Leighton came in, white coat over street clothes. He'd been 'on a party,' he explained. Another message came from the mine superintendent. Ten men, anyway. It was not necessary to bring the rest.

"Unoccupied beds were made ready, piled high with heavy blankets over bulging copper hot-water cans. In the ward bathrooms lint and bandages covered every available space. Still they did not come. The doors were open leading from the main corridor to small side porches. The night was mild. The stillness was tremendous—overpowering. I stepped outside and listened. In the distance a cheerfully persistent bob-white. Above were countless stars. Back of me the silent hospital and over all that dull red glow.

"Then, far in the distance, I heard them coming, the faint, rapid thud of the hoofs of the mine mules hitting the firm dirt road. Then the sharp click-click. They had reached the beginning of the asphalt pavement which marked the approach to the steep hill. One by one over the brim of the hill came the mine ambulances, six of them, in weird relief against that strange illumination, carrying so much of untold suffering, an almost supernatural caravan.

"THE procession turned in the ambulance gate. Men dismounted, drivers, bosses, buddies with their miners' lanterns, dark, still fastened to their caps. Opened ambulance doors revealed huddled shapes of shawl-covered women crouched over the still forms of this mine's latest victims. In one ambulance there was a young Catholic priest, white, scared, sick-looking. The women clambered down clumsily, making room for Doctor Leighton and me. Hospital custom required a careful examination of such prospective patients before actual admission. A man past all human aid should not be disturbed unnecessarily, and it is best that a hospital death rate be kept low.

"Inside the battered wooden ambulance the air was thick—foul with the stench of linseed oil, unaired cloth-

The Days

By Margaret Wheeler Ross

THE dial in the court below
Marks off the hours obedient to the sun.
And says of them,
So many make a day,
As in their course they run.

The calendar upon my wall
Marshals the weeks--like soldiers in a row,
And names the months,
In orderly sequence,
As marching on they go.

But I am not as old as they will say,
I do not count the days he is not here—
I do not live when he has gone away.

ing, unwashed, sweaty bodies, stale liquor, feverish, garlic breaths.

"Inspection by the uncertain light of electric torches, though difficult, was conclusive. There were those few whom we left to the priest. The rest were carried in on sagging shutters. Ten of these shutters there were, in all. With awkward tenderness they were laid end to end along the length of the main corridor. Women, trailing behind, squatted again by their stolidly suffering men and, squatting, rocked rhythmically, their stifled moans and broken words of prayer rhythmic, too. It was as though the suppressed agony of these tortured men found muffled, incomplete outlet through their women only, and that subdued, almost sublime in its very repression.

"We worked swiftly. Other internes appeared—extra nurses. One by one these shutter loads were carried to the dressing room, the crude first dressings cut away, others applied. There was no complaining. Just doglike, heart-gripping gratitude and occasionally, 'Vader, missus—please.'

"STRANGE how in a great emergency certain memories stay with us. Through it all I can see the tall, gaunt, white-uniformed figure of our hospital superintendent—a forbidding woman, I had thought her till then. Light had gone from the sky, from the culm heaps, from the sputtering gas jets and, in the chill of early morning, the fog bank was heavy over the river. It was then that I saw her standing by the long line of shutters in the supremacy of her real greatness. She rested her hand on the head of each man. The women clung to her. There was something of the Divine Healer about her. I cherish that memory.

"One of our ten men needed the priest before morning—screens about his bed, extreme unction. One—and it is of him that I must tell you—was a Welshman, the only one who came to us alone, his miner's lamp—that one by your side, Stephen—clutched in his blistered, festering hand; on his powder-pocked, swollen face a smile which stayed there to the end.

" 'Put me anywheres, nurse,' he said. 'I ain't burned so bad. But give me my lamp. I don't need no candle.'

"This wasn't a case of one-third surface burns. It was double that. I knew. He didn't. I watched him through the days that followed. He talked but little of himself. I gathered that he expected no one to visit him. No one did. Long periods of telltale quiet, ending in poorly repressed restlessness. Frequent pleas for water. Sometimes the anxious frown of semi-delirium. More often the brave smile. Always the miner's battered lamp on the glass-topped table by the bed.

" 'He'll pull out before morning,' Doctor Leighton told me at the end of a week of it, and he did.

"Early that night we put the flimsy white screens around the bed and I stayed near. Just before midnight he called me. Delirious, I thought, but his mind was clear. He pointed to the miner's lamp by his side.

" 'Light her up, nurse,' he said. 'Turn out the gas. She's got oil in her, a little—enough.'

"At first a splutter—insufficient—then, as the stiff wick caught, a clear, small flame.

" 'Sit down, nurse. Watch the light. Listen, I'm goin' out, but this flame ain't. You'll think I'm batty, but I ain't. Things have gone hard with me, under the ground and other times, too, but I've always kept this lamp trimmed. She'll light you through anything. I want you to have her, nurse. Light her up when things go wrong. She'll see you through.' "

Mrs. Richard Lincoln, State Chairman of the Woman's Civic League, leaned forward and looked fixedly into the face of the man beside her.

"That's my story, Stephen," she said finally. "Always when I've floundered I've burned the lamp and it has lighted me through. Hysterical, if you will, but sincere. For once, I shall desert my party, as you call it, and the women of this State will come with me. More than that, you will stand by us and, God willing, this Miners' Protection Bill is going through."

For an instant only the little lamp burned low, flickered, spluttered.

"The lamp, Stephen! Don't let it go out."

Slowly the powerful mine operator got to his feet and, gropingly, found the door. The light of the lamp rose and fell. Then, fed by some unseen source, burst suddenly into a steady, unwavering flame.

"You win, Ruth," he said, a trifle huskily. "The Bill shall go through."

The woman was alone. The lamp burned on and, from the spent embers of the dying fire, came a dull red glow.

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Uncle Sam's "Dog Mail" in Alaska—photograph showing winter mail carrier on the way from Nome to Point Hope

"Shut up and slide out!" said the city editor. "I'm sick of seeing you sitting around the office. Go on out and shake some of the mildew off your brain!"

The Power of the Press

An Aspiring Minion of the Fourth Estate Scoops His Rivals on a Young Girl's Love Story—Not to Mention the Girl Herself!

By Frederick A. Thompson

Illustrations by John R. Neill

GIRLS disappear every day in a big city like Washington, D. C., and as a rule for such obvious reasons that I didn't get much of a thrill when the city editor called over to me, "Tom, a girl's run away from home out southeast. Take a loop out there and see her folks."

"Say, boss," I said, "I've got a hunch that there is going to be a big murder this morning. Better just let me get this girl story over the phone, so's I'll be on hand here if anything big breaks. There is nothing to these affairs."

"Shut up and slide out!" said the city editor. "I'm sick of seeing you sitting around the office. Go on out and shake some of the mildew off your brain, and if you don't come back with something hot in the way of a feature story, you'll probably be looking for a new job."

There was more truth than humor in his last remarks. I took the air, climbing into my dilapidated car at the curb outside and shaking along out toward Adamson Road, where the girl had lived and didn't any more. It was a good long way to go and I had time to collect my thoughts before I arrived.

What the big idea was in sending me out, *in personam*, on this story, was all a blank to me, unless it was that the city editor just was sick of seeing me sitting around the office. But how could I help it if murders and fires and real hot scandal—which things it was my particular privilege to report—were scarce? It wasn't I who was falling down on the job, but the three hundred-odd thousand people who composed the city of Washington.

The houses I was now passing were turning grayer and grayer in their general appearance as I approached that section of the city, where gray-faced people and gray lives are all there are, except for occasional scarlet blotches of murder or suicide. Even a murder or a suicide out in the gray section of the city wasn't worth much in the way of a story, unless it was distinguished by some freakishness. There, among such seething numbers of people, everything happened too often for any one thing to be unusual.

As for this girl's disappearing, I could write the whole thing without another fact more than I now had in my possession, except for a specific description of her. She had either run away because she wanted to escape the life she was leading and had vague ideas that it would be different somewhere else, or she had hooked off with a man for a short trip on the primrose path, before the

latter suddenly dips into the ash can. Even the specific details of her appearance would not be necessary, as I could fill in that part with a description like this:

"Young and pitifully eager for gaiety, she was only a slip of a girl, those who knew her say. If there was any flaw in her nature, it was a certain willfulness in her pursuit of that elusive modern will-o'-the-wisp, good times! Her mother tearfully assured the reporters who gathered in the front room of the little house, where a hush lay as though some one were dead, that Edith was a good girl. It is feared by the police, however, that evil associates, unknown to the girl's mother, may have been her undoing, and have persuaded her to leave home." Such a description was all that the public was alleged to want, and it was all old stuff to which first-hand investigation of the facts could add very little.

BUT as I turned into Adamson Road—behold, a good sign! In front of the address where the girl was supposed to live was another dilapidated flivver which I recognized as that of Mack Riley, my confrere on the *Evening Eagle*. At least, I was assured he wasn't somewhere else in the town "scooping" me. Mack was sitting on the front steps of the house, a small, two-story, gray-clapboard affair, and he waved a hand to me as I drew up and stopped.

The entire neighborhood was of small, two-story, dingy-gray houses. The scant front plots of grass were mangy and, in places, bald. The narrow cement walks to the front stoops and around to the back doors were of such thin slabs that chunks were broken out of them here and there, and weeds gaped in the apertures. The back yards—what I could see of them—were bare except for clothes lines and scattered tin cans and piles of rusty junk. Altogether, the surroundings were depressing—untidy and cheap-looking.

"What's the dirt?" I asked Mack as I came up to the steps of the stoop and sat down beside him.

"The girl's back," said Mack, and accepted the cigarette I offered him.

"What did they send you out here for?" I asked.

"Sick of seeing me around the office, I guess. Gosh, but the town's been dead the last few days!"

I nodded sympathetically, and silently rejoiced to find this company in misery.

"What about the jane?" I queried.

"Her mother told me she was back, then slammed the door in my face," said Mack. "I was just wondering whether to pry around some more, or to mosey down to Jake's gin emporium, and do my stuff. You don't need facts, but a good shot of booze on a story like this!"

At Mack's suggestion, I went to the front door and rang. It was one of those ready-made doors with a window in the top panel and some machine-made lace on the inside of the window. In a moment, a hand drew back a corner of the lace, and a pair of dark and perturbed eyes looked out at me. Not recognizing me, and seeing that I wasn't Mack back again trying to force an opening, the door was opened a crack.

"What do you want?" said a harsh nasal voice. A faint odor of stale cooking crept out of the house with the voice.

"I'm a reporter from the *Daily Record* and I want to get Edith's story from you, otherwise the story about her that will get into the papers this afternoon will turn your hair white," I said, all in one mouthful and as pleasantly as I could.

The door was opened a crack further, and a frowsy-haired woman, with angular lines of care and overwork on her narrow face looked out at me.

"There isn't anything to tell," she whined. "Edith's back. She just went to see some of our folks in another city. And I don't see why there has to be anything about it at all in your dirty old scandal paper anyway."

"Off that bunk stuff," said Mack, stepping up and realizing that the reportorial third-degree method would have to be resorted to here.

Mack was a genial, brutal Irishman who could be rough in a manner that passed with such people for being masterful, and as a rule broke down the frail resistance that kept them from pouring out their stories.

"Who was the man?" said Mack brusquely and he moved nearer the door, so that he could shove his foot in, if the woman tried to slam it in his face again.

"There wasn't any man, I tell ye," whined the harsh voice, and the woman looked at Mack with fear in her eyes. Reporters stand second only to the police for inspiring respect in such circles.

"Who's the man I saw her down at the Casino with?" continued Mack, naming a near-by popular dance hall and "faking" ever having seen the girl.

"I don't know. She don't go down to the Casino, hardly ever," the mother pleaded, the fear growing in her eyes, as her suspicions of reportorial omniscience were confirmed by Mack's methods.

"Get out! I've seen her down there lots, lately, with several men. She's been getting kind of gay, hasn't she? Come on, now, come clean on the story and we'll give you as good a deal on it as we can. If you hold out, we'll be nasty. There isn't much that we don't know."

Suddenly a spirited voice came from behind the door.

"It's a lie. You don't know anything. I haven't been down to the Casino for over a month, and there wasn't any man."

The door was pulled fully open, and Edith Simms stood before us. She confirmed our hopes that she was good-looking. She was about twenty years old. I reflected that I would be able with a clear conscience to write a column full of description of her blue-eyed, golden-haired beauty. She was dressed in a simple blue sweater, brown skirt, brown stockings and shoes. Altogether, she presented an appearance of simplicity and good taste, which was not marred by cheapness.

"Hello, sister," said Mack, with a broad grin. "Glad to get back?"

Even this clever shift of Mack's to surprise out of her a quotable line, failed of its purpose. His technique was getting in his way.

"I'm not your sister, and I want you to clear out," said the young lady, gently, but firmly. "Mother has told you the facts, and that is all there is to it. There is nothing worth writing about."

VISIONS of the city editor's contempt if I brought in a thin story prompted me to step forward now. I wasn't as old a reporter as Mack, and it stood me in good stead. He had failed on the rough, quick and easy stuff, so I tried politeness.

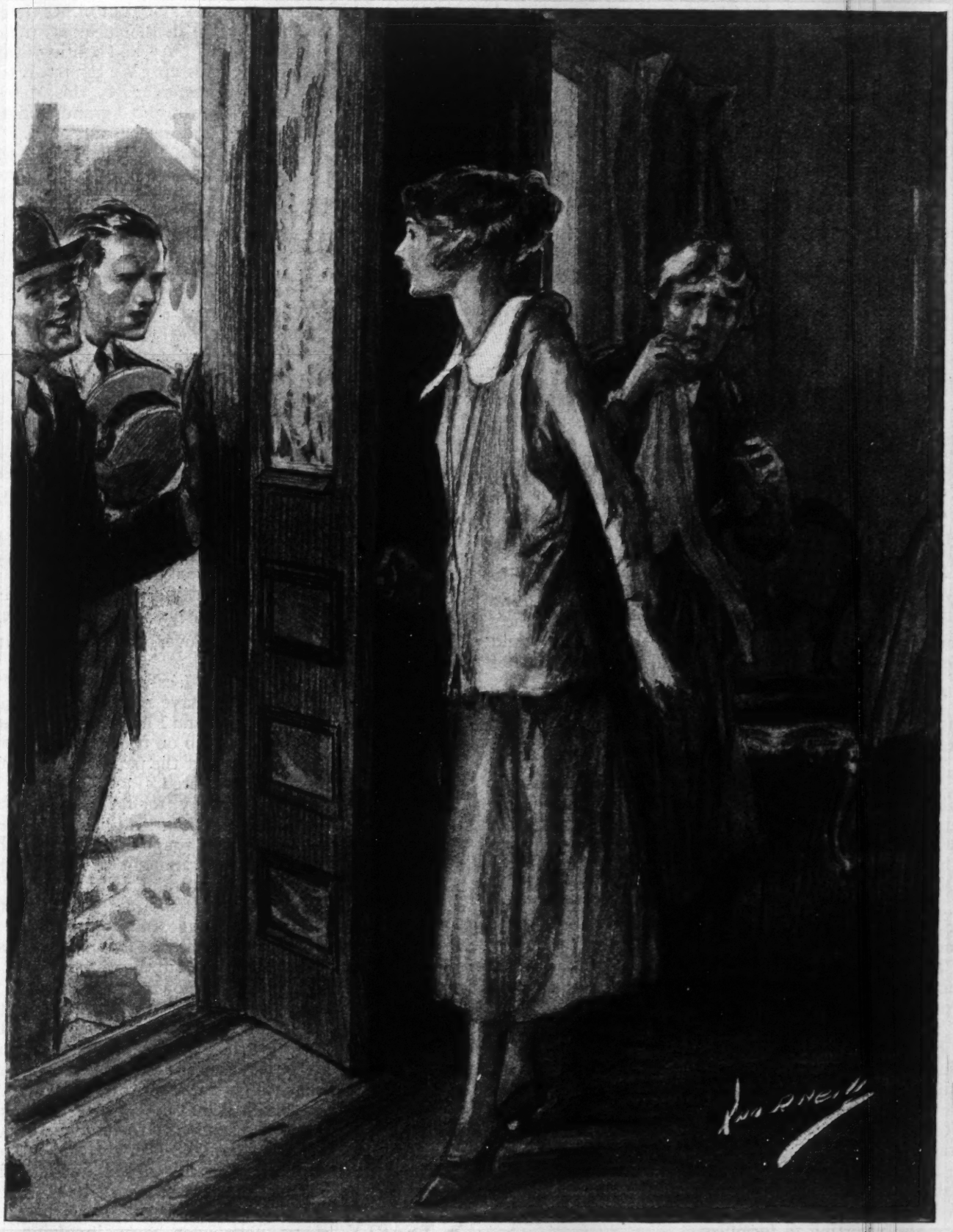
"We're as sorry as you are that we have to butt in this way," I said, "but if we don't do it, somebody else will, so what's the difference. There will have to be a story, as our papers got the report of your disappearance down at police headquarters. So the only thing for us to do is to get all the facts from you; it is the only way we have to be fair to you!"

This mollified both the girl and her mother somewhat. Their anxiety abated, and they looked at each other as though for suggestions.

"Well, what else can I tell you?" said the girl.

"What were the names of the relatives?" asked Mack. "And where do they live?"

The girl considered a moment.



The door was pulled fully open, and Edith Simms stood before us. "Hello, sister," greeted Mack. "I'm not your sister and I want you to clear out," said the young lady, gently but firmly

"As a matter of fact, I didn't go to relatives," she finally confessed. "I just went up to Philadelphia, and stayed at the Dolly Madison Hotel for women for a couple of days. I can prove that I stayed there, and that I was absolutely alone." She added the latter with a defiant look at Mack, as if to settle any suspicions he had raised of her having run off with a man.

"What did you run away for?" asked Mack, still mantaining his inquisitorial manner.

Again the two women gazed at each other anxiously.

"I just wanted a little change," the girl finally said, and stared over our heads at the row of gray houses and the untidy yards on the other side of the street.

"Was *he* going to meet you there?" inquired Mack, with a broad, knowing smile.

The girl tossed her head with impatience, scorning to answer him.

"What was the matter, didn't *he* show up?" continued the irrepressible Mack, seeing now a possible story of the girl having run away to be met by a man, and the latter having failed to put in an appearance.

ONCE more the girl, with a bright light of dislike in her eyes, refused to answer Mack. This was as good as if she had said, yes, as far as he was concerned. Anything he might say, according to yellowish journalistic ethics, he could ascribe to her in direct quotation, as long as she had not absolutely denied it. He was "hanging" a story on her.

"Were you looking for a job there?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered. "And I couldn't get one, and I got homesick and sorry for what I had done, so I came home."

"She's always been a good girl," whined her mother, "and I can't understand why she did it." She peered at her daughter, as if herself doubtful of her.

"Oh, mother, I was just tired of sticking around here and being good, so I went off thinking I'd do something else for a while."

"She doesn't have many boy friends," continued her mother, as if to settle doubts along these lines. "She doesn't run around with the boys hardly at all. She's home nearly every evening, I can say that for her. And when she goes to the movies, it's generally with some of her girl friends."

This was all just negative stuff, as far as the story Mack had in mind was concerned, so he took up his questioning again.

"Who's your best boy friend?"

After considerable parrying, he got the information that her best boy friend was a former high-school classmate, John Merritt, now an automobile mechanic in a downtown garage. She scornfully denied any connivance with John, and backed her assertions by her indifference to Mack's threats to interview him.

"Go ahead. He just doesn't know anything," she said, and the way she said it left little doubt in our minds that she was right.

Time was slipping by, and the hour was nearing for Mack and me to get our stories in before our papers went to press. Altogether, the interview had been unfruitful of "feature" material.

But on the other hand, I had taken a strong personal liking to Edith. That probably accounts for all that subsequently occurred. There was one of those unexplainable and accidental sympathies between us, so that we just liked each other from the start. This was no disparagement of Mack, for it was equally true that, had she been of a slightly different type, Mack might have established that essential understanding, and I would have been working around cold on the outside of the story and resorting to formulas.

As Mack and I were taking our leave I even went so far as to suggest to the girl that I thought I knew where I could get her a good job in Washington. This she accepted gracefully, in the spirit in which it was offered, and her mother thanked me, saying that if her daughter had something to do besides just helping her around the house all day, she might be more satisfied.

At the curb, by our machines, Mack and I conferred as to what "angle" we should take on the story.

"I'm going to take that 'left-at-the-altar' angle," said Mack. "We can get a great story out of her sitting up there in that women's hotel in Philadelphia, sitting anxiously by a window, looking out—and waiting, waiting for the guy that doesn't show up. We can put it sort of ambiguous-like, with some reference to this Merritt fellow, so that the whole thing will sound grand, and full of heart throbs and mystery and mush—see?"

I admitted that I saw, but at the same time I was seeing a story of my own, which was beginning to grow on me.

"I think I'll write it straight, with a little dash of hot-pazazza here and there," I said.

"Suit yourself," said Mack. "The story's old stuff any way you look at it, and will probably be cut to pieces and stuck inside."

With a wave of his hand and a violent clattering of the gears of his car, he was off down the street toward his office. I followed after him, and on the way my story took shape and warmed up as I thought it over, so that when I rushed into the city room and hurried over to my typewriter, anybody might have thought Edith Simms had eloped with a duke.

"What's your story?" the city editor yelled over to me.

"Good for a column on the first page with another column on page two," I answered.

"The dickens you say!" he came back irritably. "What's the story? I'll tell you how much space you'll get on it."

My idea was a "flivver" I knew, if I had to tell the city editor about it before I wrote it. It would need too many explanations to get it over, and a city editor hasn't time for explanations.

"Don't bother me, Louie!" I called back to him, so intensely serious that I must have made an impression on him. "I'm hot on my idea, and I'll lose it if I have to tell it all out. I'll stake my job on it as a good feature yarn, though. Run it, and after the paper comes on the street, if you don't like it, I'm fired."

"I think I'll fire you anyway, for being fresh," said Louie, whose bark was worse than his bite. Louie and I were friends, so he had to talk rough to me, or the other fellows on the staff would have thought he was handing me all the "gravy." "Go ahead and write it, fool!" he called. "And remember what you've said. If the story's not good for the front page, out you go!"

My old typewriter rattled like a Gatling gun as I unloosened on it everything I had in the way of words. I told the story straight, but wallowing in local color. I described the drab surroundings, the drab life of the young girl, the spiritlessness of it, the boredom and the rude repression of any Prince Charming ideas she may have harbored secretly, when she saw the pitiful hack matrimony had made of her mother. It was the stuff that the great nine hundred and ninety-nine newspaper readers out of every thousand had themselves in their own lives. It was a mordant dash of realism, in comparison to the distorted and hackneyed romanticising that makes up the usual feature story.

NEARLY every newspaper yarn involving the same situation describes a girl running away from home because there was a man in the case. I wrote of a girl who was running away from home because there wasn't.

The picture of her in Philadelphia seeking a newer, happier life, and finding only greater drabness than Washington at its worse could produce, nearly brought tears to my eyes as I wrote. Her timorous and unskilled venturing in search of a job merely brought her rebuffs

Helpless and lonely, Edith sat in the lobby of the women's hotel, where men were as rare as prudence could make them

and despair of herself—of her usefulness in the world. The men she had to meet were rude and frightened her. The fact that she had had so few boy friends at home, because of her mother's bringing her up in a strict, old-fashioned way, had born in her romantic notions practically extinct in the average girl today, and also unfitted her for carrying them out.

SHE sat, helpless and lonely, in the lobby of the women's hotel, where men were as rare as prudence could make them. At the one or two cheap restaurants where she went in search of diversion which might renew her courage, her intuition told her that the only men there who showed any interest in making her acquaintance were vicious. She was romantic enough to expect to find a Prince Charming, yet she was sensible enough not to mistake a "bad egg" for a prince. Finally, homesickness and remorse drove her home, broken and dispirited, with all hopes of a happier life crushed.

As the saying goes, "I knew my stuff." I wasn't writing "hokum," but by that peculiar chance of inherent sympathy between Edith and myself, which I have spoken of, I knew that the story I was writing was absolutely true and exact except for unimportant details.

When I took my copy over to the city editor, he started cursing horribly while reading the first paragraph. Then, as he read on, he grew silent. When he finished he looked up at me with a funny smile.

"You must have taken a flop for that girl, Tom. It's a good story. Hey, son!" he yelled to the office boy. "Here, beat it out and tell them to set this up for the front page banner."

He handed the kid a slip of paper on which he had written, "*Bored Girl Leaves Home.*" Under this he had scrawled as a subhead, "Edith Simms Returns When Adventures Bore More than Home Ever Did."

"That's great stuff, Tom," he said. "The rank and file will be talking about that story for a week, it will come so near to what most of them have known in their own lives. Get a couple of good follow-up stories to it, and, instead of your having to look for another job, I may raise your salary a couple of dollars a week."

He was right about the story being good. The paper came out with the headline to my yarn strung clean across the top of page one in type so large and black that any one who came within a half mile of a newsstand could not have helped knowing that "a bored girl had left home."

When I went down to the courthouse after the paper was off the press to see about getting Edith a job, they were talking about her down there already, not knowing it was my story they were talking from. Believe me, their words were music to my ears! Mack's story, along the lines he had sketched to me at the curb in front of Edith's house, had been cut to nothing and stuck on an inside page, where there were two or three others almost exactly like it, except for the difference in the names of the cities where they had occurred.

Pearl Whitelaw, the woman assistant district attorney, who was quite a friend of mine, was the only one I let into "the know" on my story. She had read it already, and was much interested in Edith. So she promised to do her best to get her a job, which was practically an assurance that Edith would get one, as Pearl swung a powerful influence in Washington.

All of which is not so bad. But wait—the best is yet to come!

THE next morning when I got down to the office, I was treated with a consideration which had not been paid me for weeks. The managing editor looked up, and smiled and said hello. This was quite a change from the scowl he had been in the habit of giving me for a how-do-you-do, as if he were suspicious of whether I stacked up big enough to be worth my salary.

Bill Meehan, the foreman of the composing room, came out while I was at my typewriter cleaning up the "re-writes" from the morning papers, which was the first routine work of my day, and he launched into a long serious harangue about what the folks out his way had thought about Edith's adventure. His interest was more complimentary than the words of praise I had received from others. It was Edith and her experiences—not my writing—which had got home to him and the folks he spoke of. That was success. Believe me, I drank it all in, too, like a plant that's been without water during a hot July.

The next thing on the program was to get a "follow-up"—because people had become interested in Edith Simms and they would want to see something more about her in the next day's paper.

A little later in the morning, dusting along out toward 2345 Adamson Road, I wondered how Edith would take my intimate revelations of her life. Probably she would be abashed into a protective reserve, now that she knew of my fortuitous gift of understanding her. I smiled to myself, as I thought of how I would laugh her out of her silence and self-consciousness. There was nothing that I couldn't do with her, now. A little success is a wonderful energizer of these emotions of mastery.

The section of the city I was passing through did not look quite so gray today as it had yesterday. There was an occasional picturesque unevenness here and there that spoke of character and individuality. These were meager enough, certainly; but at least there were some signs of them, which I had not been able to see yesterday. "Trala, la, la; la, la, la!" I sang to myself blithely, with the assurance that I could not be heard above the rattle of my "tin-lizzie," and so mistaken for a lunatic at large in this serious country of ours, where to carol to one's self on the street is to welcome arrest.

I THANKED my lucky stars when I saw that Mack's flivver was not ahead of me on Adamson Road. Edith herself opened the door at Number 2345 and let me in. She took me into the front parlor. She wore the same skirt as yesterday, but instead of the sweater, she had on a white blouse. She certainly looked pretty enough to be the high jinks of real romance. As I had expected, she was rather diffident, but her smile and the light in her eyes reassured me that at least she was not angry.

"Well, what did you think of the story?" I asked her.

She laughed and actually blushed.

"It was true," she said, "and it was kind."

I could have leaped up in the air and shouted with pleasure at her answer. Louie must have been right, I reflected, when he said I had taken a fancy to the girl. It was probably this latter element which had dictated in my story what she called kindness.

"You were a peach of a story," I told her, with a grin. And we talked on for a while, both a little embarrassed. I mentioned that Pearl Whitelaw had promised her a job, if she wanted it. Then I told her I had come out for a "follow-up." She deplored that. I explained that there would have to be some sort of story about her, and I put it on more or less personal grounds, by saying I hoped she'd be kind enough to help me out.

She was wonderfully sympathetic, and after some moments of silence in which she seemed to be debating within herself what I would consider news, she said, "Four boys—John Merritt among them—who are the most popular boys with the girls around here, called last night for the first time in months. I guess it was your story that did it. And I got"—here she had to stop to laugh—"I got six letters in the mail this morning from men I don't know, telling me they were lonely and asking to see me, with a view to marriage." She laughed now heartily.

She showed me the letters. They were the pitifully strained circumlocutions of the sort that some poor "nuts," gone a little queer from loneliness, or other causes, write on these occasions. From my previous experiences, I could picture the wan-faced type of men, who had been their authors. She asked my advice about answering them. The best thing to do, I said, covering two points with one argument, would be to let me have the letters, and I would print them. This, more than anything else, would assure putting a stop to the ardor of their senders, and effectually avert any more of the same kind.

After I had overcome her minor scruples, she gave me the letters, not so much because she wanted them to be printed, but rather because she felt—though I don't know why—under some obligations to me. She further assured me that she would not tell any of the other reporters who might call about them, which would give me a peach of a "scoop" on my "follow-up."

Her mother came in as I was making my departure, and with the anxiety that she had been under when I had seen her yesterday lifted, I felt emanating from her a gentle personality, brave and uncomplaining in the face of the pettiness which was her lot in life. She was even bright in her comments on the turn of events. And the harshness of her voice which had assailed me the day previous now seemed to have disappeared, together with the lines of care which had been drawn on her face.

Mack was just arriving as I was leaving! He waited for me in his car.

"Some story, Tom!" he said, with a grin—he could afford to be generous as he had "scooped" me more often than I had him. "What's new?" he asked.

"I'm working cutthroat on this story, Mack," I told him, which meant that I was bent on following my own leads, and asked no favors and wanted none in the way of swapping news. This was all in the game, too, and the only way in which we reporters, each in turn, were able by occasional exclusive stories to impress our editors with our superior energy and ingenuity. Mack smiled and waved his hand in farewell as I shook off down the road to the office in my "speed-wagon."

Needless to say, "the follow" was even better than the original story of Edith's running away because she didn't have any young men friends, since it related how, on her return home, four young men—the most desirable in the neighborhood—called on the same evening, and she received six letters of proposals from perfect strangers. It was a new quirk to an old story, and there was an element of comedy that is priceless. As far as I was concerned, it had the added advantage of being exclusive in my paper.

Again Edith shone on page one for all to read, who ran: "Cupid Smiles On Girl Runaway!—Edith Simms, Who Left Home Because Lonely, Overwhelmed with Proposals On Return."

The *Record*, with the exclusive new story about Edith in it and the funny letters of proposal she had received from "cranks" printed in full, sold more copies on the street that night than all its competitors combined. Washington was agog about Edith's romance. Girls and boys who had been to school with her boasted of the fact. Those who had merely seen her, some time or other, divided on the question of whether she was "just ordinary-looking," or had "something strange about her, I don't know what, but you could tell she was different." Mothers of young and impressionable girls were keeping sharp eyes on them and brought up the subject of Edith at the dinner table in order to discount the possibility of another girl's repeating Edith's success.

THE next morning, the follow to my "follow-up" presented the old problem that drives more reporters to suicide than any like cause does in any other profession—what the devil was there new on the story that would satisfy the public? They were voracious for news about Edith now, and would be looking for it in the evening paper. If I fell down on my job, and had nothing outstanding to offer, the advantages that I had so far gained would be in a large part lost. Such were my thoughts as I dusted out toward Adamson Road with the warning

from the city editor, "For Heaven's sake, bring in something new!" New? New? Did things forever have to be new? Was there no satisfying this demand for newness?

The variations that I had noticed in the houses and surroundings on the previous day did not seem so apparent now. In fact, I looked for them in vain and concluded that, after all, merely an effervescent state of my mood had permitted me to see them yesterday. I racked my mind for a different angle which I might be able to take on Edith's story that evening. None occurred to me.

Even when Edith herself led me into the parlor, as on the previous day, and I had propounded my difficulties to her, although she took a sympathetic and intelligent

"Four boys, who are most popular with the girls around here, called last night for the first time in months," she told me. "I guess your story did it"

interest in them, she had little that was new to offer.

The number of young men who had called the evening previous had increased from four to eight. John Merritt had been back and, seeing the competition that was developing for her hand, had become as attentive to her as the crowds in the front parlor would permit. The letters of proposal she had received had increased in number to ten. The latter I explained, in the face of her questioning the efficacy of my having printed the letters she gave me yesterday, was due to the fact that the second batch of letters had probably been written before any of their authors had seen the evening paper.

I ALSO added that, although it hurt my vanity and was in fact unreasonable, there were quite a few people in town who had not become readers of the *Record*, yet. This would be remedied, I assured her, if only she could give me a good story for today. Although she really tried hard, and was anxious about it, she could offer nothing really new.

Gloomily I made my departure, contemplating making a final "clean-up" story out of the not very exciting fact that Edith had been offered a good job in the District Attorney's office. As a rule, "clean-up" stories are just a fizzling out of the main story. However, occasionally luck will have it that a train of events will come to a natural dramatic climax that cleans up the story effectually as far as the public's expecting anything more on the subject, but leaves them with such a good impression that the story becomes a byword and outlives the usual fickle interest in news.

Then, in the midst of my despair, inspiration came, just before I got to the office. The idea struck me so forcefully—it seemed to me as beautiful and full-fledged as Athena, when she sprang from the brow of Jove—and I was so hard-pressed, both in point of time and lack of something to write about, that I did not stop to consider the consequences. I dare say, the same thing happened to old man Jove, who is said to have been put to a good deal of trouble by Athena, later on. Anyhow, I blew into the city room with such a grin on my face that the city editor didn't even ask me if I had a good yarn, but just called over, "Make it about two columns, Tom, old boy."

Again, that evening, the startling vagaries of Edith's fate were blazoned forth for all to behold in a bold black headline on page one. When I saw the paper come on the street, I turned hot and cold. I smiled wanly at the compliments of the city editor. It was by far the best story yet. But I had "faked" it. I trembled to think what Edith might do.

This newest development in the drama of Edith's life was the talk of Washington that night. My incognito in the matter, since my stories were not signed, permitted me to scout around and see how the story was taking effect. I tell you, with nothing more than reportorial honesty, that it was a sensation. People were reading about Edith's latest on the street cars, in doorways, talking about it on the corners downtown—why, there hadn't been so much talk and excitement and unanimity of interest since the last world's series.

I grew weak as I wondered how I was going to square myself with Edith. It would take some wonderfully delicate tact, and I felt myself suddenly almost sick at the prospect.

I persuaded another fellow at the office to call her up and tell her I would be out that evening about eight o'clock to take her for a ride, when I would explain everything. I gave my colleague explicit instructions that he was not to say a thing more than I had told him, and to answer no questions.

The hours until eight o'clock came around were indeed restless ones for me. I had a heart-to-heart talk with the city editor, and told him what I had done and how I contemplated squaring myself. I must say he was very decent about it all.

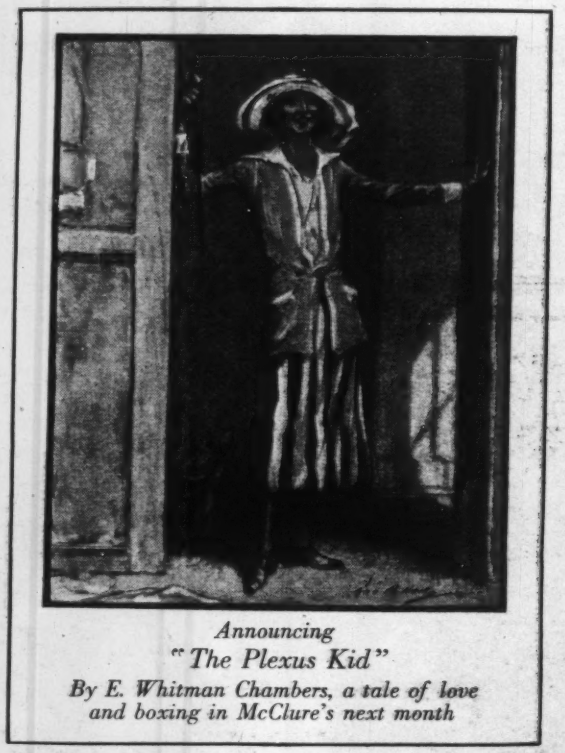
Then I went home to the little room I had out on the edge of the zoological gardens, which was pervaded at night by the mournful cry of the wolves in their cages only a stone's throw away, and there I put on my best bib and tucker and slicked my hair down with a little water. Next, I drove to a garage, where I had the old bus washed and polished and as many of the loose nuts as could be located tightened up. I had had very little breakfast, and practically no lunch, and though I felt hungry, I still had that squeamish feeling one has in times of stress of wondering whether I could really put anything down. I tried it, and had an egg sandwich and a cup of coffee at an armchair joint.

By now it was half-past seven; so, with a tremendous gathering of emotions boiling around inside of me, I set out for Edith's home. The streets I passed along seemed uncanny, as if I had never seen them before, and the folks I saw in the windows, or on the front stoops, seemed to belong to a strange race of beings with whom I could not possibly have anything in common. When I turned into Adamson Road I took an extra good look at it, seeking to impress it on my mind, with the thought that it was a scene which I should probably long remember.

As I stopped in front of Edith's house, I looked through the front windows into the lamplighted interior of the little parlor and discovered that there were several men there. I almost failed here at the critical moment. I'm afraid that I physically trembled. Three honks from my old rattle-throated horn sounded like the whole world falling to pieces in the night, it seemed to me. Two or three of the young men in Edith's front room peered out of the window. I wished that I might have been standing on the lawn in front of the window with a big fool-killer club in my hand, so I could have banged them on the head for being so inquisitive.

After a lapse of several minutes, a white form fluttered at the front door and came down the path to the curb. It was Edith, and she looked serious. Evidently she had not been pleased. I could hardly be articulate.

"Jump in," I said, unloosening the piece of rope I used to tie the off-door of my car in place.



Announcing
"The Plexus Kid"
By E. Whitman Chambers, a tale of love and boxing in McClure's next month

She got in, looking at me accusingly, with a little wrinkle of reproach on her brow, between her eyes. I tied the door behind her, and with a couple of breath-taking jerks, the old car was off, speeding down the road. I was glad then for the first time that it made so much noise. Edith couldn't possibly expect me to talk to her above that racket. I shouted to her that I would explain everything, and smiled rather feebly.

Out through Rock Creek Park we went, and along by the Creek itself, where it shines dully between the big trees in the gloaming. Finally where a stiff hairpin-turn hill winds up to a level plateau that looks for miles over fields and forest, and far off over the brightly lighted city of Washington and the lights of distant boats on the Potomac, I paused and stopped the motor. The road so far out is deserted. A hush as of a million miles from civilization hangs over the hills and forests. The chirping of the night things, and the rustle of the trees in the darkness seems only to accentuate the silence.

"EDITH," I said in a voice I tried to make masterful, as it had been in the morning. "Edith, did the story make you mad?"

"I should like an explanation," she said demurely, and with a certain archness, it seemed to me.

"Well——" I began, and paused for words. The words all came scattered in my mind, so that they wouldn't have made any possible sense. "You see," I interposed, just to gain a little time. "Ahem!" I coughed in the hope that it might clear my brain, but it had no effect, and my silence was becoming acutely painful. I was desperate. "You see, Edith," I gasped, "I love you so, I just can't think of its being any other way. Won't you—won't you? I got a raise of ten dollars a week this afternoon."

She was laughing now. I wondered for a horrible moment if she was laughing at me. Then she just sort of slid into my arms—the old story had come true again; a Prince Charming had ridden nobly out of nowhere, and the girl had known from the moment she had laid eyes on him that he was the right man to support her for the rest of her life.

MY "follow-up" that evening had been that Edith's running away because of not having any beaux had attracted such a flock of them that she had been able to pick out one to her liking already, and his name and the date of the wedding would be announced in the paper next day.

"When shall we be married?" said Edith, her eyes shining into mine.

"Tonight," I answered. "It is an elopement."

Her eyes opened wide with surprise.

"No—but why?" she murmured.

"I have already written a story for tomorrow evening's paper saying we have," I said. "And they are going to run our pictures on the front page."

"But, Tom!" she protested.

"Just a minute," I interposed hastily. "You've got to do it, dear. That ten-dollar-a-week raise depends on it. We can't get along, as I want us to, without that."

Again that adorable ripple of her laugh saved the day. Then the roar of the engine cut off all further remarks, as the old bus jerked off up the long dark road toward Baltimore, and matrimony, and happiness ever after, we hope.

A charming Alpine scene at Adelboden in the Bernese Oberland

Together they faced the rush of flames. The south bank was a great lurid wall, roaring about the pitch-streaked trunks of trees, leaping from branch to branch! A despairing conviction that they were lost staggered Kaine, but he fought on and on

Tracks That Point One Way

A Gripping Story of Elemental Forces Let Loose in the North Woods—Fire, Love and a Desperate Man

By Mary Shannon

Illustrations by Eugene Cassady

FOR TWO days Kaine's desperate flight had driven him westward through the Northern Cascades. Under the listening trees he moved, most cautious of all flitting life of the woods.

Stalwart and strong, his straight, brown canvas-clad figure merged into the shades of rough-barked trees. When at sunset the heavy screen of branches parted to the glint of water, his caution became stealth. A small half clearing opened to the shining stretch of a long inlet. No life stirred around the moss-grown cabin, no smoke rose from the stovepipe. But on the blue water a boom of logs floated, sinister warning of the presence of man.

From bush to bush he moved, searching the bank for a boat. Suddenly, from beside a log on the beach, a woman rose to her feet. She leaned upon a gun, her face lifted toward the southern horizon. Kaine saw a heavy cloud of smoke blotting the sky; the evening breeze was pungent with the odor of burning wood. He watched the woman, while he furtively scanned the beach for a boat. Placing the gun against a tree, she crossed the bridge plank and stood upon the boom. Dipping a pail, she poured water on the logs. At times she worked furiously, again her steps dragged.

Kaine waited while the sun withdrew its rays and left the inlet a slaty sheet fringed with deep fantastic shadows. During his two-days' flight he had not eaten or rested. But he must press on. Every minute of delay invited danger.

In a general way he knew this isolated area of northern British Columbia. A thinly settled land of ranchers, trappers and loggers, it had afforded him a refuge for three years. Yet slowly but surely the implacable law had traced him from Dakota to this lonely land. The futility of flight sent a sick wave of dread through him. In a flash of retrospection he saw the covert course of the wanderings that had brought him here, and far behind, like a creeping menace, the trailing officers of the law. He set his face grimly, his hand touched the revolver in his belt. He would not be retaken alive.

And even as he watched the woman with desperate waiting eyes, he wondered mutely at the disastrous thing life had become. So far had he strayed from the ambitions of his youth! Then he had worked slavishly, had given his young years to acquiring a grain ranch. A dispute over water rights between himself and a neighbor had terminated in a lawsuit. The neighbor had won and Kaine had faced ruination. A few days later he had been dragged from his sod shack to stand trial for the murder of that man. He had been found guilty, sentenced to prison for a crime he had not committed. Into his days of black despair had come a chance of escape, and he had seized it with the instinct of the wild.

Now he asked but little of life—to swim naked in the crystal rivers, to cook over a camp fire, to sell his furs to Indian trappers or strolling white men, as silent, as secretive as himself. Just the freedom of the wild! Even this they would take from him, who by law of right and wrong should walk a man among men. Above him a bird trilled its good night to the listening shadows. Kaine watched it, a wistful desolation in his eyes. It seemed so carefree, this creature of the forest!

The woman had thrown herself on the beach, her shoulders sagging against a log. He moved toward her, lifting the bushes aside, eyes alert to note her least move. A boat to cross to one of the islands! A slender chance, yet it might bridge the way to freedom! As he neared he saw that her head was nodding. He wanted that gun safe in his hands, then he might bargain with her about a boat. His foot struck a stone. She sprang up just as his hand closed on the gun.

Into his startled perceptions flashed the image of her—a dark lithe woman, erect, eyes wide with the blaze of determination. He felt she would spring at him.

"Look here," he began, "I'm in a hurry. All I want is a boat. Got one?"

"You from Bill Watts?" she demanded.

"No," he returned coolly.

"Then—who are you? What you doin' here?"

"Stranger. I just want a boat to go on up the coast," he explained.

"Where you from?" she persisted.

"Back there." Kaine nodded toward the grazing country. "On my way out," he added.

"Been here quite a while," she speculated, her dark eyes straying over his clothes. "You ain't a logger."

Kaine shook his head. She glanced wearily toward the inlet.

"There was a boat, but—my man took it. Anyhow——" Her eyelids drooped, her voice drawled heavily. The steel-like vitality seemed to languish, but she straightened and eyed Kaine defiantly. "I'm watchin' the boom. Three nights I ain't slep' only a wink or so at a time. It's hell!"

"The boom?" repeated Kaine, glancing at the logs. He could not forbear a wild glance behind him. Even now the human bloodhounds might be closing in upon him.

"Yeh. I'm dead beat. Sometimes I don't know what I'm doin'. Been walkin' along the edge o' the logs to scare myself awake. Now there's the fire comin'—got to fight—I'm dead beat!"

SHE sagged against a tree, her face passive in the mask of sleep. Beautiful she was, marvelously proportioned, with the grace of a sapling in the open spaces. Above her sombre clothing the brilliance of sun-kissed skin lay smooth on features that somehow reflected tragedy. Young in years, there was yet a hint of age about her. Long brown hair rippled into careless braids that hung below her waist. She might have slipped from the bark, a dryad adventuring from other worlds. She was swaying to the ground when Kaine sprang to help her.

"Look here!" he cried. "Wake up. Tell me—what's this about the boom?"

"I'm watchin' it. Bill Watts tried to steal it. My man's away. He'd kill me if—— Now, the fire——"

She drooped against him in the dead sleep of utter exhaustion. He carried her into the cabin and laid her on a blanket-covered pile of straw. He quivered as he bent above her; the feeling of her warm body lingered in his arms. For years he had scarcely spoken to a woman. He stood beside her in perplexed indecision, striving to fathom the import of her faltering words. He was turning toward the door when he saw food on a table—dried salmon, biscuits, a pot of black tea. He ate ravenously, forgetting all else but the appeasement of hunger. He started violently as a shadow crossed the door, but it was a deer moving fleetly to the north.

Returning to the beach, he stood, gun in hand, peering uncertainly into the shadows. Dusk was closing in, murky, heavy with the smell of burning wood. On reflection he knew where he was. Not far up the coast, in an old camp, he would find a boat. Each gust of wind convinced him the fire was nearer. It would be fierce and quick after the very dry summer. Yet it brought a sense of security. There was little likelihood that he would be followed into the face of a forest fire. But suppose the men came for the boom? The girl was dead for sleep. He would wait a few hours and trust to luck. At intervals he stole to the door and stood listening to her regular breathing. Each time he went back to the beach and resumed his watch.

Inky black, the night wore itself into a dawn thick and gray. The foliage drooped, ash-coated, flecked with charred bits. A breeze sprang up from the south, roaring through the trees, whipping the surface of the inlet roughly. Gusts of heat scurried about the clearing. Kaine rushed to the cabin. Now the fire was traveling toward them, a menace swift and terrible. It would mean a race for life. Even in his urgency he hesitated. The girl was so utterly asleep. Her bruised hands were thrown carelessly above her head. When he touched her she sprang up, terror in her face. Even as she swayed in the lethargy of sleep she rubbed her eyes determinedly.

"Come quick!" commanded Kaine, lifting her to her feet.

"What is it? Did he come?" she demanded.

"Fire!" Peremptorily he drew her toward the door.

He laid her on a blanket-covered pile of straw, then stood gazing down at her for a moment in perplexed indecision

Her glance swept from the tossing tree tops to the boom.

"It's close—the fire," she affirmed.

Returning to the cabin, she took the blankets from the bed, placed food in a tin box and hurried out again. Kaine followed, thinking she was prepared to leave. On the beach she turned to him.

"Keep right along the coast," she advised. "The fire may turn any time. I'm rested now, and my thanks to you fer lettin' me sleep."

"But—you're coming too, aren't you?" demanded Kaine.

"Me? I gotta watch the logs."

"The logs! Why, you're insane! Best thing to do with the boom is cut it adrift," suggested Kaine impatiently.

"Adrift! No, no! My man—you don't know 'im. If the whole country burned he'd come back an' look fer them logs. He warned me——"

"But you can't risk your life for a bunch of logs! Look at the sky!"

She shook her head and turned toward the plank bridge.

"Don't you see?" urged Kaine, catching her arm. "The logs'll go, and—what's to become of you?"

Her face lifted briefly to him. "Likely I kin save 'em. If I can't——"

He was struck by the baffled, beaten look in her eyes, the semblance of age on the young face. She went out on the boom and began to saturate the logs. Kaine stood watching her, the swift easy bend of her body, the supple strength of her arms. His anger at her stubbornness turned to rage against the man who had so bent the will of this strange woman that she would face death rather than incur his anger. Was it love or fear or a mingling of both that prompted this almost unearthly loyalty, he wondered.

HE looked to the north where the forest stretched. He would join the flight of animals even now rustling to safety. In an hour he would have a boat that would mean escape, another chance to begin life, to live a free man. He stopped, arrested by a vision, vivid and terrible. He seemed to see the fire closing in around the boom, the woman alone upon it, desperate, beaten! And suddenly it seemed of so little import, this life he wanted to save, this lonely wandering existence. He hunted about for a vessel and went out to help her. She stopped before him.

"Ain't you goin'?"

He gazed at her, drinking in the light of long-lashed eyes, the scarlet curve of her mouth. She repeated her question and he shook his head.

"Yes, yes," she commanded wildly. "You've got to go—right now! I know. You let me sleep; you watched the boom. I'm mighty obliged, but now—— There ain't no use in you stayin'. I kin fight fire——"

"If you stay, I stay," returned Kaine firmly.

As he worked he measured the width of the inlet, noted the dryness of trees on the south shore. The thought of his own safety had slipped into the background of his consciousness. He drew a sense of assurance from the woman's calm acceptance of fate, a sort of heathen blindness of belief in an irresistible, irrational power determining all things. He wondered dispassionately if he were to be retaken, or if the fire would forever solve the problem of life for him.

Toward noon the capricious wind changed its course, sweeping inland, and they rested on a log.

"Why didn't you go?" asked the woman, as she prepared fresh tea.

"And leave you alone—to this?" returned Kaine incredulously.

"I been alone days an' days, worse off than this," she answered passively. "Way off in the woods, my man away——"

"Where is he?" demanded Kaine abruptly.

"Gone after a tug. He'll be back any time," was the brief reply.

"And he left you alone to watch—knowing the fire——"

"Sure. He tied the boom to them posts, then buried 'em—the posts. I saved the cabin from fire last spring—alone."

"But this fire!" he protested. "Don't you know it's apt——"

"Him an' Bill Watts split—had a fight," she explained. "They didn't log these—picked 'em up here an' there."

"Drift logs?" But Kaine looked appraisingly at the choice timber.

She made no reply.

"HOW long have you been in this country?" he asked gently.

"I was fourteen when my maw married me to Hen Cottle, just before she died. Di—that's my name. Nine years we been at this—takin' logs where we found 'em, robbin' fur traps, rustlin' stray beef. I been all over this country."

"Born here?" asked Kaine.

She shook her head. "Up Alaska way. I ain't ever been outside."

They sat in quiet, hearing the slap of tiny waves against the logs. Hot winds tossed the trees and brushwood, birds flashed dark specks above them in quick silent flight, the antlers of a deer moved across the surface of the inlet. Kaine became aware that he was staring at Di, deliberately absorbing into his senses the singular charm of her. Between her simple words he divined the tangled tragedy that shadowed her face. Suddenly she turned to him.

"What you wanted fer?"

Kaine started. In the momentary shock the blood seemed to ebb from his body, leaving him cold and pale. There was no penetration in the look she turned upon him, her tone was casual. Before he could speak she smiled. The warmth of her dark eyes, the sweetness of her mouth filled him with a great hunger for sympathy. He saw again the hostile faces in the courtroom, heard his sentence from the lips of the judge, felt the stifling crush of cell walls, lived again the hunted, lonely years—— Ringed with the wilderness silence, in the face of certain danger, it was as though time and laws had suddenly ceased to be.

"I'M wanted for something I didn't do," he returned bitterly.

"Murder?" she whispered.

He nodded, turning abruptly from the kindness in her eyes. Timidly her hand stole into his. He caught it in a fierce clasp of gratitude.

"No chance o' clearin' yourself?" she asked.

"None," he answered hoarsely. "Everything was against me. It's the Pen—or this." He waved his hand toward the hills.

"I know," she replied evenly. "But you get used to it. My man — seems to me like he's always wanted fer somethin'!"

With a swift turn the wind blew straight from the south. From out the wall of smoke a deer's startled head appeared. With a spring it was gone into the

"Bill, you ain't lyin' to me?" Di flung her shaking hands toward Watts, in her voice was a sharp ring of pleading

forest. The shaggy outlines of a bear blurred against the green, lumbering to safety. Fleeing animals and birds were moving before hot blasts of wind. Di sprang to her feet. In a rising surge of blind rage Kaine gripped her arm.

"Look here, Di, this is senseless sacrifice of yourself. The fire's coming fast. Come on while there's a ghost of a chance!"

He was drawing her toward the trail when her voice, an arresting ring of agony, checked him.

"What's the use?" she cried sharply. "You don't know! If the logs burn—I'd rather be dead. I couldn't get away from him. I've tried it an' tried it. Once I was a month in the woods. It was heaven. I thought I'd got away, but he found me—dragged me back. For days I couldn't stir outta the cabin. Suppose I got away with you. Well, it's no use. He'd find me—find us. Only way I'll ever get away from him is when I'm dead. If the fire should come—— Well, seems as if I'd be glad of it——"

HER eyes carried a look of finality that silenced Kaine. She turned and went out on the boom. He worked beside her, quick to help her on rough places, fearful of losing her in the thickening smoke. The wind roared among the tree tops, rushing past them in hot angry waves. Against the leaden sky a tongue of flame flashed like a gleam of lightning. Another curled toward it; they met and spread in a line of conflagration. Kaine took the blankets and box of food and motioned to Di. They went out to the end of the boom.

"It's the merest chance if we save it," he remarked, glancing from bank to bank of the inlet. "Stay on this end out from shore. We've got to watch close. Sparks—that's the danger."

They saturated their clothing and the blankets. Di dipped her hair and it hung streaming about her. Masked with wet cloths, armed with dripping blankets, they faced the rush of flames. The south bank was a great lurid wall, roaring about the pitch-streaked trunks of trees, leaping from branch to branch. A belated bird, with scorched wings, fluttered limply into the water; heads of swimming animals swept by the boom in the direction of the north shore.

Kaine watched, fascinated—the trees shriveling, lost in the hungry sea of flames; dense clouds of smoke rolling and twisting skyward, sparks and burning brands hissing into the water. It was like a dance of demons. A huge spark fell on one of the logs, and a flicker of fire ran along its length. Di sprang toward it, but Kaine held her back. In a moment he had beaten it out.

The heat was growing intolerable. Gusts of wind sent leaping tongues of flame out over the inlet. Di staggered and fell on the damp logs. Kaine threw a wet blanket over her and bade her lie there. He sprang to the shore end of the boom where logs were beginning to crackle and blaze. From deep within him the instinct of life-preservation rose up to spur him on. He was one with the life of the forest, to fight for his life, for the life of the woman beside him. His magnificent strength hurled itself against the fury of the flames.

How long the fire lasted he did not know. His head grew dizzy, the sting of heat and smoke blinded his eyes, the torture of thirst seared his throat. Di was up and fighting beside him. It was not fear that burned in her eyes, but a desperate determination. Sparks soared across the inlet and fell on the north shore. Here and there a blaze shot up from the trees.

A despairing conviction that they were lost staggered Kaine, but he fought on and on. His inflamed eyes saw strange things as in a dream. A bear dragged its hairy, dripping bulk from the sea on to the boom, rested pantingly, then splashed into the water again. A bird flapped its helpless wings in his face. There was a roaring in his ears, the flesh-searing heat enveloped him.

THEN suddenly, he knew that the wind had changed, and was carrying the fire inland. On, on, with a hunger that knew no appeasement, the flames blazed over the crest of the hill. The pall of smoke cleared on the blackened ruins of the forest. Skeletons of trees crackled and snapped and burst into tongues of flame. The north

bank was seamed with burned strips, the trees and herbage untouched drooped gray and wilted. The old cabin was a mound of glowing coals.

Di and Kaine sat exhausted on the gritty logs laving swollen faces in cool water. Kaine's arms were blistered, his hair and clothing singed. He looked at Di in humble wonder—her hair drying in a tumbled cloud, eyes glowing in her burning face. Dead things floated on the charred débris on the inlet: tiny birds, small furry creatures, the carcass of a deer. Save for a blackened strip here and there, the boom floated unharmed. Di glanced from it to the smoking forest. She dropped her quivering face in her hands.

"You stayed—you were good to me!" she sobbed. "If the boom'd burned I'd been down there." She motioned out over the deep water.

An answering throb rose in Kaine's throat, and he leaned toward her, encircling that drooping form with his arm. Her iron fortitude had yielded at last. He had wondered if she were a woman of flint made impervious to emotion by the hands of cruelty. She leaned against him, turning her face till it was hidden upon his shoulder. She was all woman, weeping, quivering with deep sobs. In a few moments her stoic calm returned. She threw back her damp hair and rose.

"I'll be gettin' us some tea," she said, moving toward the shore.

BUT the danger was not yet over. Stray sparks from burning trees soared across the water and started an occasional flame in the logs. At dusk Kaine made Di lie down on the beach, and through the weirdly dark night he paced the logs alone. Dancing flames from the gloom of the forest threw grotesque, conflicting shadows on the murky inlet. As he watched, Kaine thought of the part the fire had played in the tragedy of his life. With the coming of day he must push north and cross to one of the islands. A lonely protest gripped him. He couldn't leave Di like this. And yet——

At dawn the woman started up. She looked out over the smoke-shadowed inlet, eyes widened, nostrils dilated. In a moment the stoic calm of days became a sort of hysteria.

"A boat! A tug! It's my man. Don't let him see you!" she begged. "He'd kill us, he'd give you up! Go on up there among the trees——"

Kaine moved to the shore, his hand on his revolver. He forgot everything but the terror in her face. Her hands were upon his arm, wildly pleading, when from behind them came the summons quick and sharp:

"Throw up yer hands—both o' you!"

Mechanically Kaine obeyed. Di sprang for the gun, but the commanding voice arrested her.

"Di, don't you stir a step! I got the gun, anyhow. Face about now!"

A rough-bearded man jeered at them over a pointed gun.

"Think you've got us, Bill Watts, don't you?" raged Di. "But you——"

"Shut up, girl! Got some news fer you. Who's this?" He nodded toward Kaine.

"He's—a stranger—driv in by the fire. He—he helped me save the logs," gasped Di.

"H'm! Wal, I'll jest take charge o' this six-shooter o' his. Now, we'll talk business. First thing—these is my logs now, Di. Yes, you're shet o' Hen Cottle at last—for good an' all. Police shot him last night—got him in the lung. Why, girl, what's wrong? You'd ought to be darned glad after the way he's kicked you 'round. Funny, but wimmen an' dogs is such darned fools about men——"

Di had crumpled on the beach, ashen-faced, shaking. Kaine was leaning over her, heedless of a warning growl from Watts. She lifted her eyes. Deep in the intense purple glow a thousand vibrations quivered and quickened with the storm of emotion. She flung her shaking hands toward Watts, and in her voice was a sharp ring of pleading.

"Bill, for the love o' God, Bill, you ain't lyin' to me, are you?"

"Lyin' to ye? No, here comes the boat—the tug. Ask any o' the men. He's deader'n a doornail!" His tone was almost triumphant.

She struggled to her feet, and, with hands clasped on her throat, swayed like a drunken woman.

"Nine years," she whispered brokenly. "Nine years he's beat me an' dragged me in the dirt. Now—I've got away from him at last, at last!"

KAINE gripped her shoulders. The blanched, drawn face, the starting eyes, the heaving breast—he feared for her reason.

"Di, hush! Be quiet," he said firmly.

"Quiet!" Her voice rose stridently. "Seems I got to scream to the very sky! Nine years, an' me only a kid! Death—'twas the only way——"

She slipped from his grasp and lay sobbing on the beach. He knelt beside her. The men from the tug gathered around in awed silence. Watts stooped and laid his rough hand on her arm. There was an unsteady note in his voice.

"Di, don't take on like that! God knows no woman ever went through worse hell than you. Come now. We'll take you on the boat with us. We'd ought to be movin'——"

But the woman lay, face hidden, shaking with dry sobs. Watts straightened up with an embarrassed attempt at a laugh.

"I'll hand it to Hen, though. Put a last one over on the police. They didn't even know they'd hit him. He got outta his boat an' crawled into an old cabin up here. Guess he knew he was done fer. It burned, an' there's only his bones left an' part o' that funny long knife he had—— Anyhow, the police went back thinkin' the bones belonged to some other fella they had come up after——"

A GRUNT of approval rose from the men. They withdrew and began to busy themselves about the boom. Kaine still knelt beside Di, touching her hair, murmuring gently. The import of Watts' words had burned itself into his brain, but he would not allow himself to think about it yet. For a time Di paid no heed to him. As she grew quieter he lifted her to a sitting position. Her dazed eyes wandered about the water and blackened wood as if seeing them for the first time. But when they turned upon him she clutched his arm with tense fingers and whispered:

"Oh, you oughtn't to've let them see you! If they knew! Me—I was thinkin' only about myself," she added contritely.

Just then Bill Watts' heavy boot crushed the earth beside them.

"We're ready now, Di. Don't want to get caught. Some loggers down here waitin' fer these logs. Come on. Want a job?" he added, turning to Kaine.

"No. I'm on my way outside," returned Kaine easily.

"Well, we've got to be movin', Di," Bill repeated impatiently.

"Me? I ain't goin', Bill," she replied dully, eyes fixed on the bobbing logs.

Watts' eyes were shifting uneasily toward the boom and the steaming tug.

"Tell you what, Di," he suggested. "We'll leave you some grub an' call in here tomorrow on our way back. If you change your mind——"

Without waiting for her reply, he went .to the tug and returned with a sack of provisions. She paid no heed to his roughly solicitous good-by, only stared into space.

Soberly she watched the tug and boom till they were swallowed up in the smoke-hung dawn. The dazed look of a spent deer lay in her eyes. She shuddered and glanced about.

"Is it true, I wonder? Seems to me—he'll come back. Oh, it *is* true, isn't it?" she cried, the piteous questioning of a child in her eyes.

"Yes, it's true," soothed Kaine. "But you should have gone with them in the boat——"

"Don't ever want to see one of 'em again," she breathed.

The need of action urged Kaine.

"Di, I'll have to move along now," he suggested, looking at her in a troubled way.

"Where you goin'?" she demanded, starting up in sudden anxiety.

"Out to the islands. I'll try to get a boat there, an'——"

"Best make fer the Upper Country," she returned decidedly. "I'll take you to the pass. I'm goin' that way to the stock country. It goes way back. You get to the big white sea somewhere."

Kaine stood irresolute. After all, if he could stay in this land—— If the police had been thrown off his track by the skeleton they had found in the burned cabin—— Di reached for the sack of food, but he intercepted her and swung it upon his back.

IN silence they crossed the burned strip and stepped on damp soil under huge cedars and pines. Fragrant stillness breathed in cool shadows, open spaces were aflame with vivid reds and yellows of Indian Summer. Kaine's spirits were mounting. A month, a year, a lifetime—whatever fate decreed him—he would live each day in trust and faith. And Di! He wondered what thoughts were in her mind. When the mask of nine repressed years had worn away, her face might be again the face of a happy girl.

At the mouth of the pass the timber opened to the silver of a lake. The sun, piercing the smoky haze, poured its golden warmth upon it. Two little birds rose from the trees and soared singing above them. Higher and higher they flew, dipping, swaying, always close together, the lyric sweetness of their song floating through the windless stillness. Di watched them, a tremulous light warming her still features. She gave a little cry. Over the soaring pair, with deadly aim of flight, hovered an eagle. Closer and closer he gained upon them, till the three moving specks dropped over a range of hills.

"Poor little things!" murmured Di.

She pointed to a ravine above, lined with flaming trees, that led on to white glistening peaks.

"That's the way to the Upper Country. It's big an' wild—a mighty sweet land——" Tears brimmed her dark eyes, but her voice was steady. "Say, I'm goin' with you. I know the way—every pass an' river an' hill——"

Gently Kaine laid his hands on her shoulders. In his heart he had already spoken his own sentence of banishment.

"Di, I can't let you do it—I can't let you share my life of hiding——"

"I don't care! I'm goin' with you, I'm goin' with you!" she declared passionately.

"Di, there's life reaching out to you. You've roughed it, had only the hardest—— Think, they may take me tomorrow, and it won't be—alive," he asserted with a grim smile.

"They won't take you!" she cried, clasping him fiercely. "They'll never find us. They can't take you! You didn't do it, you didn't do it! When the end comes for you it's for me, too!"

"Di, Di!" entreated Kaine, striving vainly to unclasp the clinging arms.

Faint and sweet a birdcall trembled through the windless air. From over the range of hills the bird pair soared in reckless safety. Di watched them, a triumphant light in her tear-wet eyes. There broke from her lips a ripple of sound, half sobbing, half laughter:

"See! The eagle didn't get 'em! They're together yet. Mebbe he won't get 'em—not today, or tomorrow, or ever——"

Before the tremulous hope in her face Kaine's wavering steadied into a courage swift and new. With eager hands she drew him into the shelter of the tree-lined pass that led on and on to the glistening peaks.

With a tremulous light warming her still features, Di watched the soaring pair as they flew higher and higher, always close together

The Sky Pirate

Another True Story of Aerial Adventure

By Major "Tom" Vigors

Illustrations by Theodore Van Gorp

Even as we looked at it, the plane commenced a dive straight for us

Fate has portioned out to few men — even among those devotees of hair-raising adventures, the night flyers — such miraculous escapes as have been the lot of Major "Tom" Vigors, British birdman and aerial secret service agent. This is one of a series of his stories written for McClure's.

SHORTY and I were out on a free-lance job, which means that we had orders to go anywhere and do anything we pleased over the lines, spying out whatever enemy activities we thought might interest Headquarters or the Intelligence Staff.

We had been out two hours and a half and were just returning, having seen little of interest except some troop trains on the railway between Audenarde and Courtrai, traveling in the direction of the latter town. We had chased one of these trains and put it out of "mess," so that naturally we were feeling very bucked with life and things in general.

Moreover, there was a mysterious glamour in the moonlight night that kept our spirits soaring as we passed homeward over Ypres. Sometimes a tragical sight can be very beautiful, and Ypres from the air on such a night was both. The majestic ruins of the famous Cloth Hall and prison could be easily distinguished, bathed weirdly in a silver glow, and as I watched them drifting by below my thoughts went back to the summer and winter of 1915. Memories of the canal, of Menin gate and Hell Fire Corner, crept through my mind, and vividly I remembered a ration party going up the Menin Road—a party which had been wiped out except for two members. I was one of the two.

I had now not the slightest regret for those terrible past days in the Flanders trenches, by comparison with which the breath-taking hazards of the air seemed bliss.

Dickebusch Lake, probably next to Ypres the most noted of landmarks for airmen in this sector, could be plainly seen in the moonlight, while the whole of the devastated area was pinpricked with flooded shell holes touching each other, and as we flew over them, they glistened like myriads of tiny mirrors.

Turning south, I throttled the engine back and shouted out to Shorty, my observer and pal, that I was going as far as Armentières, and would turn east at that point, heading in the direction of our airdrome.

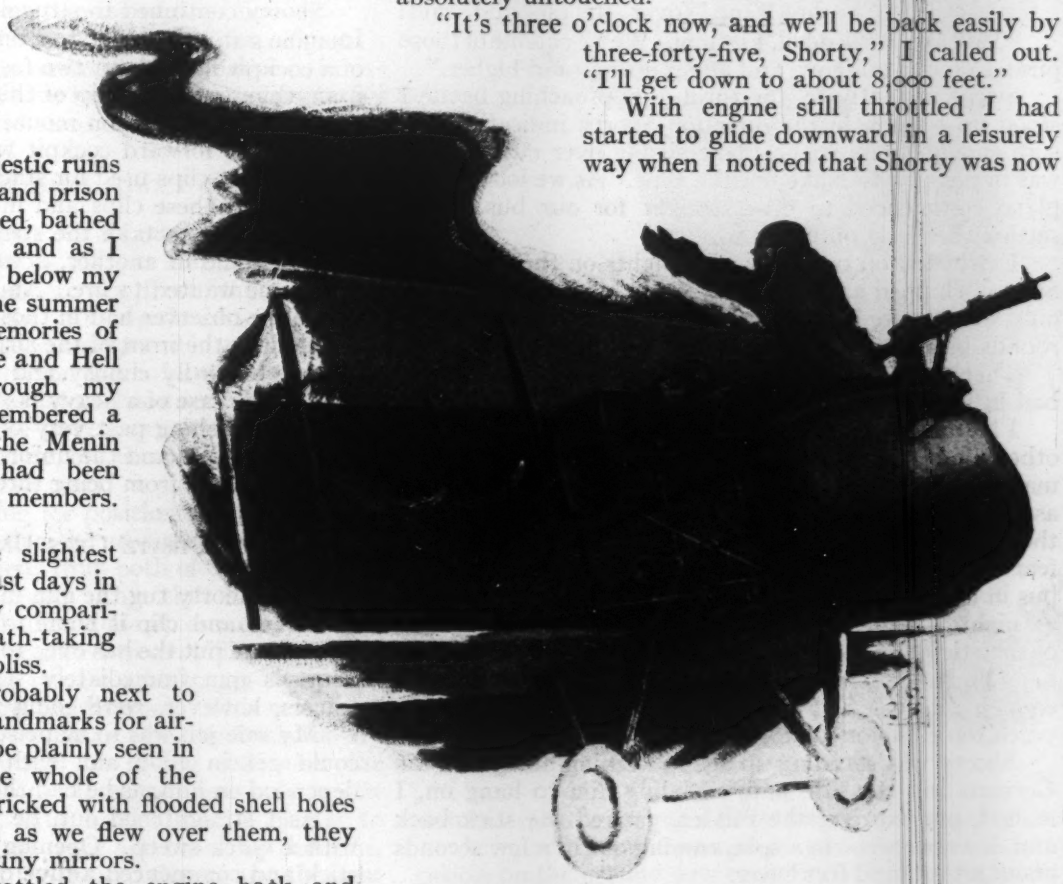
Shorty had turned around in his forward "office"—we were flying a pusher plane, that is, an airplane with the engine and propeller behind the pilot and observer—and was half leaning over the fuselage toward me in order to make himself heard.

"All right, old man," he said. "Go ahead. We might see one of those Boche pirates we are hearing so much about lately."

Shorty was referring to the news we had received that the Germans were flying some of the planes they had captured from us. Thus taken for our own flyers, they were able to soar over an Allied airdrome and learn the night signal, thereafter doing a lot of damage and getting away absolutely untouched.

"It's three o'clock now, and we'll be back easily by three-forty-five, Shorty," I called out. "I'll get down to about 8,000 feet."

With engine still throttled I had started to glide downward in a leisurely way when I noticed that Shorty was now



Suddenly Shorty leaned over to me and exclaimed: "We've got one of those Pirates on our tail now!"

standing up, looking out over the top plane toward the tail. Suddenly he leaned over to me and said:

"Talk about the devil, Flatfoot. We've got one of those pirates on our tail now, and about a thousand higher."

Swept instantly by the thrill of approaching battle I stood up to look in the direction Shorty indicated, and sure enough there was a plane sitting over our tail. It was impossible to make out the type. As we looked, the plane commenced to dive straight for our bus. This settled the question for us.

I switched off our navigation lights on the wing tips. Shorty whipped around and grabbed his Lewis gun—the only weapon we had for a scrap—and let off a couple of rounds blindly, to make sure it was working O.K.

Then started the first and most furious fight I ever had in the air at night.

I had one great fear, and that was a collision with the other plane. In the daytime it was possible, and, as a matter of fact, imperative to get as close to an enemy ship as possible, for several obvious reasons—but at night these tactics are quite out of the question. I did not fear being hit. I knew how hard a job it was to down a bus in the daytime and thought it practically impossible at night. However, I soon discovered that I was too optimistic or that the Hun was a marvelous shot. Perhaps he was just devilishly lucky; anyhow, it was quite enough that the first burst from his machine gun came much too close for comfort.

Shorty was standing up again, keeping his eye on the German and our tail, and, signaling him to hang on, I stalled, pushed over the rudder, yanked the stick back and down we went in a spin, coming out in a few seconds about a thousand feet lower.

With a swirling rush, a huge black shape went hurtling down on our front, so close that my heart seemed to jump right into my mouth. The Hun had followed us down and overshot us as we had flattened out. The red-hot exhaust manifold of his engine could be plainly seen, with short flames belching out of the exhaust. Shorty, realizing the golden opportunity we now had, had already seized the Lewis gun, and was trying to train it as best he could on the other bus. The gun mounting on our plane was an obsolete affair, like the plane itself, but both were well suited to night flying, when most of our work was done from the glide or dive. In a fight, however, it was different.

Shorty continued to struggle with the gun mounting. Imagine a steel bar fixed to a universal joint in the middle of a cockpit floor about two feet by two feet—or smaller, if anything. On the top of this steel bar the Lewis Gun was fixed in a trunnion mounting, and on the sides and front of the forward cockpit were clips, very much like the ordinary clips used for stacking billiard cues. There were five of these clips, and in order to shift the gun it was necessary to take the steel bar out of one clip and push it home in another, according to the direction in which one wanted to fire. An enormous vision and field of fire the observer had in those days, perched as he was right out in the front of the airplane, but the gun mounting was absurdly clumsy, and one of its drawbacks was that, in the case of a heavy nosedive or sideslip, the force of the air rushing past very often took the gun and bar out of the clips, and the unfortunate observer had many narrow escapes from being thrown out of the airplane.

The Pirate Gets Under Our Plane

I SAW Shorty tug the gun mounting out of its forward socket and clip it home to his left, and, guessing his intention, I put the bus over to a vertical left bank, when Shorty's gun immediately started spitting out. The tracers, however, were going pretty wide of the mark.

My sole job was to maneuver the bus so that Shorty could get in good aim with the gun, for everything depended on him, as he had the only weapon.

As I straightened out, he waved his arm downward with a quick sweep. Opening up, I pushed forward the stick and commenced a dive down on the enemy plane, the Lewis gun going fit to beat the band. Evidently Shorty had not troubled about fastening up the leg straps of his leather coat, for the skirt was now blowing out like

Shorty and I shouted to the group in our best French, both of us copying the French people, waving our arms about wildly, endeavoring to illustrate the crash

a miniature balloon, absolutely blinding me. And Shorty apparently was finding it hard to keep anything like a steady grip with his coat blowing out.

The Boche had now started with his reply to our dive, and his tracers were flying all around us, but luckily none seemed to hit any part of our bus. Pulling out of the dive, I zoomed up and then flattened out, giving Shorty an opportunity to adjust his coat. It was absolutely useless for him—or myself, for that matter—to try to fight with a huge leather coat flying about our faces.

In a flash the Hun seized his chance and got under our tail, the one "blind spot" I did not want him to be in, and let out a stream of bullets, some of which I could hear zipping through the canvas. Taking a chance, I stalled again. In the daytime this would have been the most dangerous thing to do—a fact that can be easily realized when you remember that on the furthest point or peak of a stall, a plane is actually still for a fraction of time, until gravity begins to pull the nose down and the plane breaks into a nosedive. With an enemy on your tail, or under it, in the daytime this still would give him the finest opportunity to put a burst into your vitals and finish you off.

The Fight in the Air Grows Desperate

HOWEVER, in the dark our opponents could not keep such a close eye on us, and, as I anticipated, they shot away underneath and to our front, taking a wide climbing turn to their right. Diving the bus until everything was quivering, I pulled her up and in another climbing turn to the left came out on much the same level as the Hun, with, if anything, a slight advantage of height.

Shorty had the chance to get a stream off at him on the turn and as we leveled up, but was able to get a decent sight for only a very few seconds.

Then the maneuvering for position commenced over again, with first one getting the advantage and then the other, and occasional bursts from both of us, but we were now stunting so close to each other that it was impossible to get any sort of aim, and all our energies—all mine at any rate—were confined to avoiding a collision.

Better judgment told me I ought to get away and endeavor to fight at a greater distance. This was, however, easier said than done, since whoever broke off for the slightest moment would be giving the other the opportunity he looked for. If there were only a few clouds around it would have been a simple matter to throw the other man off the track and break up the fight.

But neither could get the desired chance and the fight had resolved itself into nothing more or less than two airplanes flying around and around in vertical banks, firing off at impossible angles one at the other, each wanting desperately to quit and neither daring nor knowing how.

Attracted by the sound of our guns and engines, people on the ground now commenced to take an interest in us, and searchlight after searchlight shot up, endeavoring to locate us, but unsuccessfully. If any of the lights had settled on one or the other of us—or both—it would

have given us a good opportunity, but the one who was in the light would not be able to do a single thing to avoid being hit, as he would be absolutely blinded from the glare. Evidently those on the ground realized this, for the searchlights went out one by one and left us to it.

No firing had taken place from the ground, although we were easily in range of guns, chiefly, I suppose, for the same reason that they had switched off the lights—the fear that they might be aiding foe instead of friend.

We were still over the British side, although drifting nearer and nearer to the Lines, owing to the westerly wind.

Suddenly coming out of a vertical bank, I pushed our bus into a vicious sideslip, away under the German, and as we went under Shorty put a half drum of ammunition into him, but without hitting a vital part, and friend Fritz, in a twinkling, was following us down, peppering us as hard as he could.

Reversing the slip to the right, a quick flatten, short dive and a zoom up brought us quickly on a line with our foe as he flattened from his dive. Shorty was now waving his arms about and pointing to a fresh drum of ammunition that he had placed on the Lewis, and his wave plainly told me that he had just put on our last drum.

I Try Tactics Used By "Aces"

I FLEW straight toward the other plane, all caution having by this time been chased out of my mind by sheer desperation, and Shorty let drive with his last drum. It is a psychological fact that, when faced by another plane taking the aggressive and heading straight for you on the same level, ninety-nine per cent of all fliers will dive down under the oncoming plane, and the flier who first commences this head-on dash can usually bank on being the winner, provided he holds on to the straight to the last. I had never tried this tactic, although I had heard "aces" talk about it, but I gambled on it in this case.

It was very difficult to get even a dim view of the Hun head on, as the exhaust was dimmed considerably in this position, but I gauged it to be not more than two hundred yards. This distance can be covered in a flash, and the other fellow was evidently absolutely petrified, for he did not even wait to fire, but took the dive as soon as he saw us coming. This was the chance I was looking for. I knew it was a foolish thing to try to carry on the scrapping any longer, with only a handful of ammunition left, and I had decided, if the German took the course I anticipated, to put my nose down, with full throttle, and streak for home as hard as I could, trusting to get out of vision of the other before he had time to recover himself and turn about in pursuit.

This I did, and our ship, which had performed splendidly right through, put up a speed she had never achieved before. Seventy-five to eighty miles an hour on a calm night was good—good average cruising speed for her. But now, with her nose down and the throttle wide open, she was putting up a fraction over the hundred and twenty-five, and would give more if I held on to it, which I did until the dashboard showed us to be only 4,000 feet up. Then I pulled out for fear of shaking the old bus to pieces.

I had lost over 7,000 feet in the flight, but our 4,000 feet of altitude was more than enough to get home with, and the closer I got to Mother Earth that night the better I felt. Throttling back, I glanced around, while Shorty climbed up on the drum locker and looked right out over the top plane, to see what had become of the German.

Then he jumped downward toward me, his face looking blue from the reflection of the little blue dashboard lamps. He yelled out:

"Can't see the blighter at all. Probably he sheered off, same as us. I say, Flatfoot, we had a near go. Do you know, he came pretty close to getting us once or twice. Wonder where he is? Looked to me like one of those Pirates."

"Never mind where he is now, anyway!" I bawled back. "Where are we?"

"Darned if I know."

"Well, take a look and find out. I'm anxious to get home quickly."

Shorty turned around and gazed down, looking out for familiar landmarks. In a minute or two he was leaning over again in his customary position.

"Steenwerck light just to the rear, northeast."

By a strange coincidence I was practically heading for our airdrome and relatively a short distance from it. Nodding to Shorty, I put the old bus over in a left bank to spot out the Lys, my usual mark when over this region.

Just as we straightened out, a sickening shudder went through the whole machine, accompanied by a crack which could be heard quite plainly over the noise of the engine, now throttled down to cruising speed. The lateral tension on the joystick, which on this type of plane is sometimes considerable, went right away, and I realized that an aileron wire must have been partly shot through and had just snapped with the strain of the bank.

The whole of my lateral control was gone, and on top of this a strange noise, like a huge rattle, could be heard. Looking over my shoulder at the right wing, I saw what had happened. The bottom of the rear right strut nearest the fuselage, which also carried the aileron wire swivel, had been shot through, and had now broken entirely away and the strut was flying from its top seating, flapping with the force of the wind against the trailing edge of the top plane. Every time the strut hit the tip of the wing a tremendous shock went through the whole structure of the machine.

We were surely in a tight fix now, because at any moment the strut might swing against the tip of the revolving propeller, and smash it to splinters. And I was practically helpless since I could not bank, owing to the aileron control having gone, and I could not touch the rudder one way or the other, because at the slightest swing the strut would crash into the propeller. Also, if the strut came away from its seating altogether, as it threatened to do, the probability is that it would be carried back into the back plane, rudder and elevating planes—doing in the booms on its way—and a crash would be sure to follow.

Nonplused, I looked at Shorty, who was leaning over the side watching the mess. Poor fellow, I could imagine his feelings. Sitting in front with no kind of control, he was absolutely at the mercy of his pilot, and could only wait there helplessly for the crash. There was nothing else to it, as he knew.

We Await the Crash

LEANING over to me, he actually grinned a little. "What in thunder are we to do now?"

"Can't do anything, Shorty. It means a crash and a bad one at that. I can't do a thing except fly straight ahead, and any minute the prop may go."

"Well, old man," he yelled, "I'll just write down what happened in case—" A wave of the hand completed his sentence and, turning around, he sat down and busied himself with writing on the back of the map case.

Left to myself, pictures of crashes I had seen and crashes I had had began to run through my mind. All my past crimes came up in front of me, petty little quarrels I had had from time to time with my different pals. I felt as feeble and afraid as it is possible for any one to feel. I

wasn't ready to quit yet by a long shot, that was sure.

Suddenly realizing what a fool I was, I pulled myself together and looked around to see if I could spot a good landing field somewhere ahead. But I could make out nothing that offered any promise. And there was no use looking to right or left. Our plane could fly only straight ahead. Mechanically I glanced at the wing tips, and discovered that I had not switched on the navigation lights after the scrap. No wonder searchlights were waving about frantically, trying to find us.

A Perilous Glide

AS I switched the lights on I wondered what was the use of doing so. Taking out the Very pistol, I shot first a white and then a blue light—the signal of the night—and the searchlights went out.

I was getting myself into a rotten state, and one not calculated to make Shorty feel any easier if he tumbled to it. Again I tried to pull myself together. I could at least fly straight, I argued to myself, and my engine was going.

And then—crash!

What we had feared happened. The strut had tipped the propeller and shattered it, and the whole plane was now shaking from tip to tail in a hideous manner. This was set up by the unbalanced prop boss revolving, every revolution of the engine being automatically turned into a big jar. Hastily I switched off the engine, and to some extent cut this down, although the propeller was bound to continue revolving a little with our impetus.

In a flash Shorty was around and looking over the side at the elevators and rudders.

Gingerly I felt the stick and, wonderful to relate, the plane answered. The elevator wires and planes were apparently undamaged, and I commenced to glide down as gradually as possible.

Neither of us knew whether, at the end of this glide—which would only take a minute or two—we should, by some lucky chance, strike a place to get down in, but we were aware that over this region such fortune was highly improbable.

We passed over one or two fields which looked like suitable places for a forced landing, but we had to continue on the glide beyond them. I could not bank to turn in or use the controls for sideslipping down, and there would not be the slightest use risking a flat turn at our height, incapacitated as we were. By this time we only had a thousand feet of altitude. In the next half mile or so we should be done.

Then straight in front of us there appeared a field which looked ideal—but it seemed sheer mockery to us; we were too high up to make it in a straight glide and would overshoot it at our present angle. If I put the nose down in order to get in, my gliding speed would be too great and we should probably shoot over the field and crash into the trees which could be seen at the other end of it.

However, there was nothing else to do, as these trees extended for quite a distance and it was clear to us we had to chance a landing here or crash into the wood.

Plunging down in flames into the heart of London—a thrilling moment in "Old Nick's Protege," the following story by Major Vigors

I shoved the nose down at so sharp an angle that we were soon making eighty miles an hour. Our landing speed was thirty to thirty-five! Well, we were in for it, I knew nothing could prevent the crash that was coming. Flattening out, we went hurtling over a hedge at about ninety miles an hour, just skimming the top with a foot or two to spare, and careened over the field a few feet up at a terrific pace.

The moon was shining brightly, and the trees in front could be plainly seen. Shorty now had his legs over the side of his cockpit, ready for it, and across my mind flashed the vision of what the crash would be like. Poor old chap!

Sitting as he was, with absolutely nothing but a thin three-ply fuselage between him and the trees, he would be crushed to death in a second. Sitting behind him, I might get thrown the instant we touched the trees and escape the crushing, but would batter up against something else and go out that way.

Then, miraculously, I discovered right in front of us and seeming to come toward us at a wicked speed, a small canalized stream, a tributary of the Lys. We could not have been more than two feet off the ground. About twenty yards away from the near bank, in a last hope, I gave the rudder a violent right kick. Anything was better than the trees.

With an awful lurch the bus slithered around flat, carried on sideways for a space, and then the left wing tip went down and touched the ground, crumpling up the whole of the left wing and undercarriage as if they had been made of tissue paper. I can remember a dim shape shooting off like a rocket. That was Shorty. Then everything seemed to go black, except that I subconsciously felt myself floating. Evidently this was the period when I was also sailing through the air, for I quickly woke up when I struck the icy-cold water, and went under.

Coming up and floundering about weakly, I somehow or other got to the bank. All this time I was not really aware of what was happening and I cannot say how I got out. I can swim a little, but not in flying coat and boots, and whether the stream was shallow or deep I don't know to this day. I remembered nothing more until I found myself on the bank with Shorty leaning over me.

Vaguely I began to be aware of what had happened.

"Is that really you, Shorty?" I asked feebly.

"It is, and we are down and alive, but why, Heaven only knows. I had my eyes shut waiting for those confounded trees and I don't know what happened. You gave me a fright when I saw you stretched out here. Thought you were a clean goner. It seemed you never were coming to." His voice broke.

He also had been shot into the water, and had struck his nose against something, probably on the bank when he was struggling out. Like myself, he couldn't remember how it had happened. Anyhow, he was covered with blood which was streaming from the nostrils, and he looked a terrible sight in the moonlight.

"Are you hurt much, Shorty?"

"No, only bashed my nose and twisted my knee."

"Well, you look awful."

"I do? You're no picture gallery yourself," he retorted.

Helping each other up, we staggered to our feet. My head was throbbing in a wicked manner, and putting my fingers inside my sodden helmet, I felt my hair all matted together in a sticky mess. I had cut my head open, and the blood had all run back through my hair and into the helmet, while I was stretched out on the ground. Half lying across the stream were the remains of our old bus. Feeling darn shaky, we held each other and walked toward it. Shorty managed to dig into the ruins and fish out a first-aid bandage from the wrecked locker. As best he could, he bound up my head.

We Are Discovered — and Abandoned

SITTING down alongside the crash we took stock of our condition and surroundings. Both of us appeared to have got off with only the superficial hurts mentioned. Certainly some lucky star had been looking after us.

We could see that the bus had broken her fall across a chain which was stretched from an old barge to the bank. What was left of the nose of the machine was just resting on the bank, and sticking in the air at a slight angle was the right wing, bent like the letter S. Of the tail booms, back planes and rudder, nothing could be seen but a tangled mess sticking in the water. The whole machine had turned completely around evidently, as the nose was pointing in the direction we had come from and away from the trees. Partly hanging over the stream was the left wing. The engine had broken away and now occupied the position I usually had in the bus. If we had been strapped in we should have been killed instantly, but as it was we had been shot out.

Just then we heard voices and looking over the stream we made out a party half running and half walking toward us. Reaching the opposite side of the stream, they stopped and looked at us, continuing to shout out questions in French, all speaking at once and gesticulating wildly. Shorty stood up and shouted back to them in what he considered his best French. I had a very meager school smattering of the language, but I tried to help him out with a word here and there, and we both copied the French people, waving our arms about wildly, first pointing at the sky, then to the plane and finally to the water and our clothes, endeavoring to illustrate the crash.

To our utter astonishment the peasants stopped talking and with one accord turned around and bolted off.

Staring blankly at Shorty, I asked him what was the matter.

"Matter," he said. "I dunno. Reckon they are all clean mad. Anyhow, we'd better make our way as best we can alone. Come along, old son."

I quite agreed. By this time we were both almost frozen, and we could hardly walk, our clothes being soaked through. Moving along the edge of the stream, we noticed some lights in the direction the peasants had taken, and a few yards higher up the stream turned in that direction also. It seemed hours, but really could only have been a short time, before we reached a tiny straggling village, around the first cottages of which we saw the crowd that had come out to us on hearing the crash. Most wonderful sight of all, in the middle of them was an English "Tommy."

Calling out to him, we quickly explained our plight, and asked him where we could find a telephone and something hot to drink.

"Why, sir, our orficer is billeted darn the road 'ere, and 'e can fix yer up orlright. Just come along with me."

Hardly believing our luck, we followed him to a house which looked slightly better than the surrounding ones, where he aroused his "orficer."

The latter turned out to be a youngster, and a good sort, and in no time we were in front of a huge fire with mugs of hot coffee at our side. He had lent us what clothes he could from his kit, and a big Frenchwoman was fussing around spreading our wet garments on either side of the fire. The young officer explained that his battalion had only just come out of the lines, and he, with his platoon, had been billeted a little away from the rest of his company, but he would send an orderly up to Battalion Headquarters and have them communicate with our squadron, telling them where we were and asking for a Crossley tender, with a supply of clothes, to be sent off at once to pick us up. When he had done this, we borrowed a supply of cigarettes, and settled down in front of the fire to wait. Considering all things, we felt pretty good, but we were still too done up to talk.

Shorty, too, was on his dignity, as our friend told us the peasants had run from us because they had thought we were Germans, and vague rumors had reached their ears that Germans, when brought down on our side of the lines, invariably turned their guns on people if they had the chance. It was too much for Shorty to have his French misunderstood for German.

The tender came in due course and, after getting into dry clothes, we had our wet things bundled up and thrown into the back of the tender. Then, thanking the officer heartily, we climbed in and were off.

When we reached the airdrome an hour later we must have looked a terrible pair about the faces, as Shorty's nose had occasionally started bleeding again, and my cut had continued to trickle slowly. However, without waiting to clean up in any way, we went down to the Squadron Office to report to the colonel, who we had been told was waiting to see us.

The Old Man looked up from his desk as we went in.

"And what has happened to you boys?" he asked.

"Crash, sir, and I'm sorry, but the plane is completely wrecked," I replied.

"Yes, sir," broke in Shorty, "and we had a peach of a scrap with some confounded Hun pirate as we were coming down from Ypres over Kemmel, and he pretty near got us, and he shot our strut away, and——"

Starting up from his chair, the Old Man stared at us.

"Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Fight over Kemmel, you say—what time?"

"Three-ten, sir."

With a blank look on his face, the Old Man sank down into his chair and turned his back to us. We could see his shoulders shaking. In a few seconds he burst into a roar of laughter, and, when he faced us again, we could see tears streaming down his face.

"Fight, did you say? Fight!" he spluttered. "Lucky for you it's no worse. Why, Bracken came in and reported the same scrap at the same place at the same time. Better see the doctor and then get to bed, boys. Why, great Scott, you were scrapping with your best pal, you darned idiots!"

Two days later Shorty and I were given leave to get over the crash. I cannot speak for him, but I, for one, never went into details about my cut head. It would have taken us too long to live it down in France.

We learned afterward from Bracken that he was just diving down to get a better view of us, and the shots from our Lewis, when Shorty was testing it out, led him to assume we were Huns. Hence his spurt of firing that set the fight going in real earnest.

Are there Any Really "New" Plots? Here is One by a Famous Writer

Horatio Shard's Enemy

By George Barr McCutcheon

Illustrations by O. J. Gatter

THE gaunt gray man arose and faced his companion.

"It is settled," he said levelly, but in a voice low and husky with suppressed emotion and, to a certain degree, wonder. "You will kill this man for the sum of one thousand dollars?"

"Sure," replied the other, a short, wiry, ferret-faced young man with frank, unabashed blue eyes. "It's all settled, mister. Two hundred plunks down, the balance after the job is done. Currency, understand. No checks. Get me?" he went on crisply.

"Certainly. No checks," said the gaunt man, a slight shudder of revulsion disturbing his ascetic, patrician features. "I have heard it said that such things could be—er—accomplished—er—for a price, but I didn't believe it possible. Have you no compunction about taking human life, young man? I mean to say, can you stand here before me and calmly agree to kill a man you have never seen in your life, against whom you have no grudge, no animosity, no——"

"I guess you'd better cut that stuff out, mister," interrupted the little gangster, an evil shadow darkening his mild blue eyes. "It ain't for you to ask questions, and it ain't for me to ask questions. So we'll let it go at that. You want a job done and a friend of mine recommends me as the party to do it. That's all there is to it. It's a plain business proposition. You want a certain party put out of the way. You ask me what my price is and I tell you. It's none of your business how I feel about it. If I felt squeamish about it I wouldn't do it, see? I'm not asking you why you want to get rid of this guy, am I? That's your business, not mine. I——"

"Just a moment," broke in the lawyer. "On second thought I prefer to tell you why I want this man killed"

"Just a moment," broke in the other, sitting down again. "On second thoughts, I prefer to tell you why I want this man killed."

"It ain't necessary," the other assured him.

"Nevertheless, I shall tell you. Sit down."

The young man glanced at his wrist watch, mumbled something about a waste of time and breath, and then sat down on the edge of his chair.

There was something significant in his manner of sitting. He suggested the tense, alert, eager runner set for the crack of the starter's pistol in the hundred-yard dash. Always uppermost in his fox-like brain was the fear that he might some time be caught napping; there was no moment in his guilty existence that did not find him set, so to speak, for the most thrilling of all dashes—the dash for life. And yet his body seemed limp. A cigarette drooped inertly from the corner of his thin lips, misleading in its very inertness.

Among his associates down on the lower East Side he was known as "Vicky the Rat." The police knew him by many names. He was a killer. That much they knew, but they had never been able to fasten anything upon him. Somehow, he always managed to "squeeze through," aided of course by persons of influence, whose names were never mentioned, but whose power was not to be denied.

FOR, when all is said and done, Vicky the Rat could be trusted to do a job neatly and with despatch. He was not cheap. No fifty-dollar man. Vicky came high. A thousand was the very lowest you could get him for, in case you wanted some one put out of the way without knowing a thing about it until you read in the newspapers that So-and-So had been assassinated in a most mysterious and baffling manner.

And to look at Vicky as he sat on the edge of the chair in the gaunt gray lawyer's private office, you would not have believed him capable of killing a fly—unless it bothered him. He was there by appointment, ostensibly to consult Mr. Shard about affairs of a legal nature. Moreover, it was after office hours and the offices were otherwise deserted. He had been recommended to Shard by one of the latter's clients, a shady individual who lacked a conscience, but was amply supplied with wits—one of those graduates of the underworld whose business it is to lead an apparently respectable life in order to make it less difficult for him to "fix things" for those who had not yet achieved greatness in the world of politics, graft, and, sad to relate, crime.

This burly individual was about to be ordered out of the outraged Mr. Shard's office, when he happened to assert in an offhand manner that he could put his finger on a dozen men who would commit murder for a couple of hundred dollars. Sort of like filling a prescription, he explained, with a wave of his hand.

This set Mr. Shard to thinking. So he dropped in one day to see the politician on business. The next day Vicky the Rat came to see Mr. Shard on business.

"I prefer that you should know why I want this man destroyed, Mr.—Mr.—what did you say your name——"

"Never mind my name," interrupted Vicky the Rat. "Besides," he went on, feeling that Mr. Shard's courtesy deserved something better than a snarl, "I've got so many names that a bull friend of mine says my name is legion, if you know what that means. A bull is a cop," he explained.

The information was wasted on Mr. Shard. He ignored it.

"This man is not fit to live," he said, knitting his brows.

Vicky, watching his man keenly, said to himself that he had never seen a cooler customer. The gunman was used to clients who had no self-control at all when it came to discussing their wrongs and the "parties" responsible for them. But Shard was quite gentlemanly about it. Vicky couldn't understand why he did not grind his teeth, foam at the mouth, blaspheme, and all that sort of thing—same as other "guys" did.

"It would not be a crime to put him out of the way," continued the speaker. It seemed to Vicky that he spoke almost regretfully. "As I said before, he is not fit to live."

"I get you," said Vicky, speciously.

"He has broken up my home."

"I get you," repeated Vicky, a trace of impatience in his voice. "Nothing new about that, mister."

"I fancy it is rather an old story to you," digressed Mr. Shard, with a grim suggestion of a smile.

"It's a darn sight older than I am," said Vicky.

"Ahem! I shall merely impart information sufficient to justify myself in your eyes, my man—notwithstanding your asseveration that it is not at all imperative."

"Sure," said Vicky, blinking slightly. "Go to it."

"First, let me preface my statement, by asking you, as one man to another, what would you do to a person who had wrecked your home?"

"You mean, copped my old woman?"

"If you prefer to put it in the—shall we say, vernacular."

"Well, the first thing I would do would be to fix up an alibi and then I would find out when his funeral was to be so's I could stand on the sidewalk and throw rice at the hearse when it went by."

"You mean you would kill him?"

"Both of 'em," said Vicky. "In a case of that kind I wouldn't play no favorites."

"You wouldn't feel disposed to give your wife—or your old woman, as you call her—another chance?"

"Well, I should say not!" exclaimed Vicky, visibly astonished.

"I mean, of course, a chance to reform."

"Oh, I thought you meant a chance to throw the hooks into me again," muttered Vicky.

"Are you a married man?"

"Well—sort of."

"I see. Now, in the event that you succeed in—ah—killing this man, would it be your first—ah—offense of that character?"

"What's that got to do with it?" demanded Vicky, sharply, suspiciously.

"I have a conscience, even though you may be without one. I shouldn't like to feel that I had been the first to tempt you——"

"Oh, that's all right. All I can say is, you don't need to let your conscience get excited over me. You just simply let it rest in peace, as the saying is."

"MY mind is relieved. Another point. If I were to give this man an opportunity to blow his own brains out, rather than to face the—ah—consequences, it is possible that he might accept the alternative and——"

"I wouldn't trust him to do it," interrupted Vicky, apparently with authority. "Surest and safest way is to let nature take its course. It's natural to kill a snake, but it ain't natural for a snake to kill itself."

"I see. You approve of murder, but you draw the line at suicide, eh?"

"Say, are you sure there's nobody hangin' around listening to what we're talkin' about?"

"We are quite alone. Every one else has gone for the day. Don't be uneasy."

But Vicky took nothing for granted. He got up and had a look into the interior of the adjoining room. Then he opened the other door. Satisfied after a searching look into the room beyond, he reseated himself—on the edge of the chair.

"It's getting late," he said, glancing at his watch. "Make it short, mister. You said a while ago we could fix up the details later on. No particular hurry about the job, you said."

"That's right. No particular hurry," said Shard, after a moment. "Any time within the next month or six weeks. The only thing I shall insist upon is that I am not to know when it is to take place. You are to use your own discretion, select your own time. I think I told you that this man visits my home surreptitiously. You know what I mean by that?"

"Sure. When you ain't at home. Nights, I take it."

"Nights," said Shard, briefly, a shadow of pain flickering in his eyes.

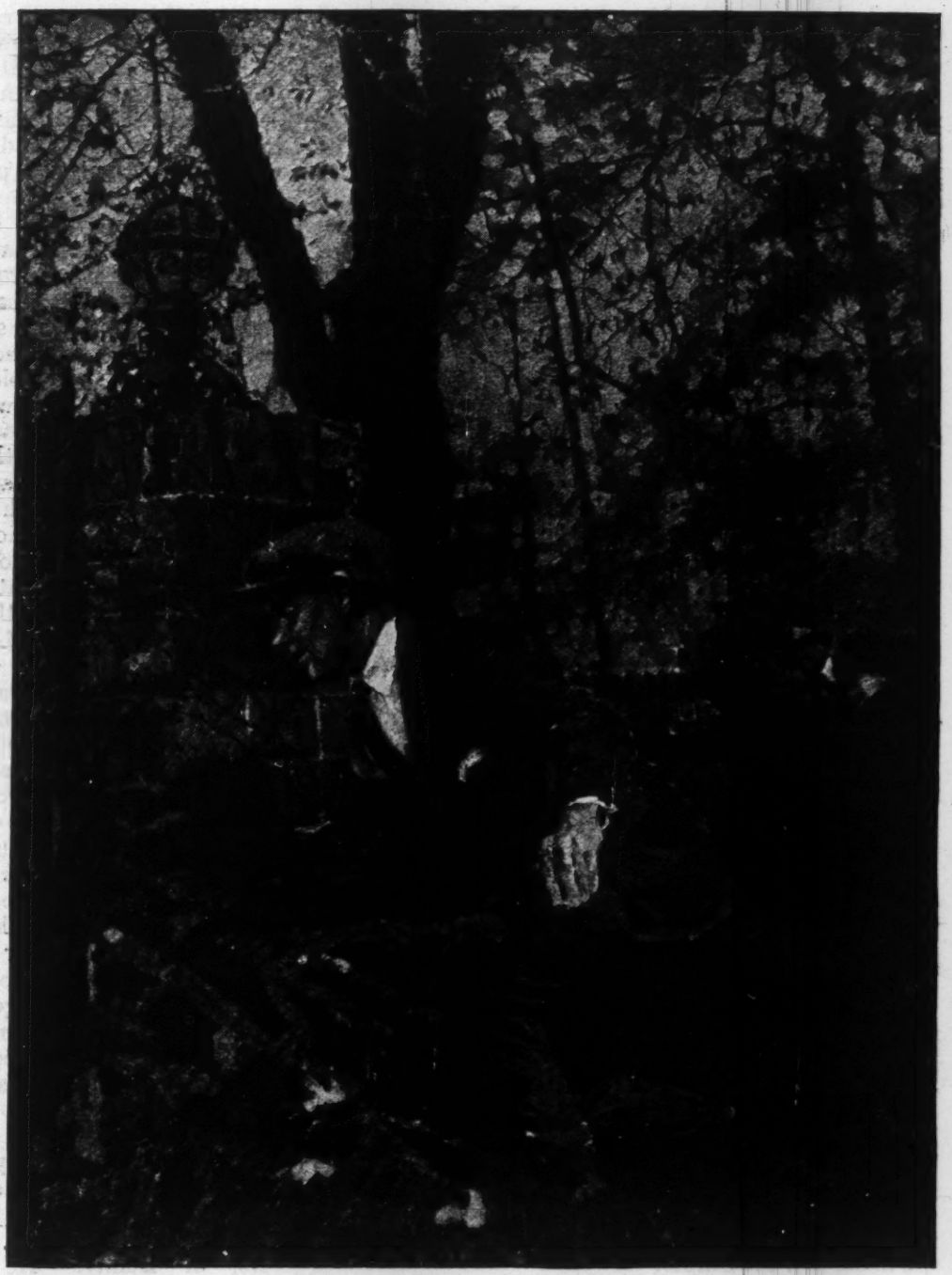
"I get you," said the astute Vicky. "You say you live out in the country. How far out?"

"A matter of thirty miles by train to the nearest station. My place is a large one. A good many acres, with drives and hedges and trees."

"Any trouble about me makin' my get-away?"

"I should think it would be very simple."

"See here, mister," said Vicky, earnestly, "what's your objection to me gettin' this guy somewheres else besides out there on your place? It ain't half so risky right here in the city, where there's nobody to be leery about except the police. Besides, if this guy is killed out there on your grounds there's likely to be a lot of questions asked. Have you thought of that? Might be some people as would naturally think you committed murder. Get me?"



The tall figure crumpled up and sank slowly to the ground, as the assassin went swiftly, silently away

"There will be no danger of that," said Mr. Shard. "I shall have the most perfect alibi, if it should come to that."

Vicky was dubious. "Well, somebody's got to be accused of doing it. I don't like the idea of puttin' some innocent guy in wrong. One of your servants, say—or some feller living out your way. It don't seem right. Better let me do for him here in town, where it's safe. All you got to do is to point him out to me a coupla times, let me get my lamps on him and——"

"I prefer to have him destroyed in sight of the home he has—ah—violated," said Mr. Shard, with finality.

"Well, that's up to you," sighed Vicky, shrugging his pinched shoulders. "Only don't ever say I didn't warn you, mister. I believe in playin' fair, you know. Chances are *you'll* be accused, seeing as how this guy has been carryin' on with your wife. You can't expect——"

"Just leave my wife out of it!" snapped the elder man.

"Sure," said Vicky readily. "It's none of my business, as I said before. Only you mark what I'm tellin' you. There'll be a lot of ugly talk and the cops will go after you something fierce. And she'll be in it, too. Don't forget that."

"I am forgetting nothing," declared the other, compressing his lips. "I am prepared and willing to be accused, young man. Understand me once and for all. I told you in the beginning that I am willing to pay the penalty for this deed, if it should be exacted. I am not willing to do the killing myself, however. The thought is abhorrent to me. I could not shed blood. I could not force myself to take human life, no matter how great the cause.

"Morally, in the sight of God, I shall be guilty of this murder. You are merely the instrument I mean to employ in committing the act. No doubt I shall be sus-

pected, even accused. No matter. I am prepared to forfeit my life. As for yourself, my man, there is nothing for you to fear. I am a man of honor. I give you my word of honor not to involve you in this crime. I would die before I would betray you.

"You are a professional assassin. You have killed men—how many I do not know nor do I care to know. All I want to know is that you will not make a botch of the job, that you will kill this man without fail. You will go scot-free. You will continue to pursue your evil course. You will kill other men for pay, just as you will slay this one.

"Our agreement is simple. I am to give you two hundred dollars in cash. Upon the completion of our contract, I am to deliver the balance—eight hundred dollars—to a certain party whom you will name later on. There is to be no further business transacted between us as individuals after I have shown you the lay of the land, given you an accurate description of your man, put you in a position where you may secretly observe him from time to time as he leaves my house, in order that you may familiarize yourself with his movements.

"IT will be necessary for you to make several nocturnal visits—I mean visits by night—to my place. It will be perfectly safe. I am a very busy man during the week. Frequently I am not at home from Monday to Friday. I——"

"I get you," said Vicky, knowingly. "I'll be sure to catch him almost any night between Monday and Friday."

"Obviously. You will have ample time in which to study the grounds and to decide upon the best way in which to leave them in a hurry. I shall leave it entirely to you as to the spot from which you will fire as he is passing out of the grounds. And that reminds me. Are you absolutely sure as to the efficiency of your revolver? Is it a good one?"

Vicky, visibly impressed by the cool, deliberate manner of his patron, leaned forward and announced with some pride that there wasn't a better gun in New York than his. He cast a stealthy glance about him and then fished an automatic from one of his pockets.

"She's that true I could drill a hole right through the center of any one of your vest buttons you care to point out, mister, twenty feet away."

Mr. Shard calmly took the weapon in his hand and examined it curiously, but carefully. He inquired as to the make and the caliber.

"By the way, you spoke of shooting holes through vest buttons," he said. "You are to shoot him from in front. You are not to shoot him in the back. Do you understand? That is imperative. I want that man killed while he is walking *away* from my home, not toward it."

"Well, say, you certainly make me feel like a piker!" exclaimed Vicky the Rat, admiringly.

"Thank you," said the gaunt gray man, bowing slightly. "Come and see me here again on Thursday, at the same hour. I will have your money for you. You will then receive furthers orders and instructions. I have changed my mind about telling you the story of my wrongs. That is all for today."

Vicky the Rat went away, shaking his head as one in deep perplexity. The tall gray gentleman with the calm, gentle eyes had him guessing.

"You'd think he was ordering something like an ice cream soda," mused the practiced assassin, as he edged out upon the crowded Broadway sidewalk. " 'Stead of which he's ordering a man shot. Gee, I bet he's a peach of a lawyer!"

One afternoon, a week later, Vicky the Rat sat down to rest upon the low stone wall guarding the roadside frontage of the Shard estate. An old and crumbling wall it was, speckled with moss and draped with shaggy dead vines. The day was warm. Vicky wiped his face with a blue-bordered handkerchief which he replaced with some care in the breast pocket of his coat, leaving one corner jauntily exposed. He was quite finicky about it. The blue-and-white tip had to be just right, for, on occasion, Vicky affected a surprising fastidiousness. His narrow-rimmed straw hat bore a red, white and blue band, his collar was clean, his dotted bow tie neatly arranged, his blue serge suit freshly pressed and singularly spotless. He wore no jewelry. Vicky was posing as a gentleman. To complete the illusion, he smoked a rather nobby pipe—not with relish, to be sure, but with commendable dash.

It was not by chance that he happened to sit down on the wall a very short distance from a gate opening upon a narrow gravel path which led to the tree-shrouded house several hundred yards back from the highway. Any one beholding Vicky resting on the wall would have at once taken it for granted that he was waiting for the rural trolley car that passed the place at regular intervals—every twenty minutes—barring accidents and shiftlessness.

But Vicky the Rat was not waiting for a trolley car. He was there by appointment, waiting for a prearranged accidental encounter with Mr. Horatio Wilberforce Shard, who was supposed at this very moment to be sauntering homeward from the Country Club, half a mile up the line.

Vicky was not nervous. He had been in far worse positions than this. *This* was simple, even elegant in its simplicity, thought he, but not exactly in those terms. He was not supposed to know that Mr. Shard, a chance passer-by, was the owner of this beautiful and extensive park. He was only supposed to ask Mr. Shard for the loan of a match as that gentleman was ambling past.

Nor was Mr. Shard nervous as he leisurely approached his gate, a golf bag slung over his shoulder. He eyed Vicky without interest as he drew near. Vicky was by no means the first person to sit on his wall while waiting for the trolley.

Vicky the Rat politely accosted Mr. Shard.

"Have you got a match you can spare, sir?"

Making that request on the streets of New York, Vicky would have said, "Gimme a match, Bill," or "Bo," or "Buddy." He substituted the word "sir" in this instance, not because of any intention on his part to appear ceremonious, but because he simply could not help it. This tall, dignified, distinguished-looking man somehow demanded respect, even from so vile a rascal as Vicky the Rat.

VICKY would have slit Mr. Shard's throat—for a price—but to save his life, he couldn't have addressed him as "Bo" or "Bill."

"Certainly," said Shard graciously, and produced a box of matches.

Between puffs Vicky mumbled jerkily: "I guess the coast is clear, mister. I been cruisin' around considerable with my lamps and I can't spot anybody on the landscape."

"Not many people pass this way," observed Shard, casually, "except in automobiles. It's rather a stiff climb up the hill from the village. Yonder is the house. You can see the front porch plainly from here."

"I been sort of sizin' the place up," said Vicky, without even glancing in the direction of the house.

"Your man is in the habit of leaving shortly after

eleven o'clock. Seldom earlier. He almost always leaves the grounds by this gate, not by the big one at the foot of the carriage drive. This path through the shrubbery connects with the main drive a few rods from the house—on the left, as you approach. Is that perfectly clear to you?"

"A blind man could see that," answered Vicky gruffly.

"WELL, in taking his departure from the house, he invariably steals along the veranda, which is dark, to the left end where there are steps leading down to the flower garden. He does not come down the front steps. He is too clever for that. And too cowardly, perhaps."

"Too slick," amended Vicky.

"We need not discuss his reasons for leaving the house in such a stealthy manner. That is beside the question. He——"

"Say, I been meaning to ask you, don't she ever come part of the way down to the gate with him?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied the other coldly.

"Well, you had ought to know," observed Vicky, with unintentional irony. "You seem to be mighty well posted on what's goin' on. Must have been hanging around some yourself—or else you went to the trouble of having somebody to watch him."

"Suffice it to say, young man, I am familiar with his comings and goings," said the other, stiffly.

"There's one thing I can't afford to risk," stated Vicky, "and that's the chance of runnin' up against some detective that's been hired to spy on this bird out here."

"I have hired no detectives," said Shard.

"On the level?" Vicky cast a penetrating glance at the other man.

"Certainly."

"Well, I guess I can take your word for it. You don't act like a guy that would double-cross a feller. But just to be on the safe side, I'll have to ask you how you happen to know all about the time and the way he leaves your house 'round about midnight, 'specially when you ain't supposed to be at home."

"That's a leading question," said the lawyer, frowning, "but I will answer it. I have seen him with my own eyes. You may call it spying if you choose."

"And say, how about the servants? Ain't they on to what's going on here?"

"I believe it was understood between us that no questions were to be asked. That is to say, unnecessary questions."

"You're right. Let it go at that. Now what sort of a lookin' guy is this friend of yours? I say 'friend' because experience has learned me that it always *is* a friend that does this sort of thing."

Mr. Shard's eyes flickered for an instant; then he answered quietly:

"He is a tall man—quite as tall as I am, I should say. Tall and rather thin. He always carries a walking stick—I mean a cane. He usually wears a Panama hat, pulled well down over his eyes. His——"

"Does he live in this neighborhood?" inquired Vicky, suddenly. "I mean by that, does he keep on walkin' after he leaves the place or does he park a car along the road anywheres? Or does he catch the trolley? I 'specially want to know about the trolley, 'cause I don't like the idea of having a car come along just as I've plugged him. Might be a lot of people on it and——"

"He lives a very short distance from here," said Shard. "Within easy walking distance. He never uses a motor. It is his habit to leave a few minutes after the trolley car has passed. For obvious reasons."

"I get you. Now, see if I've got it straight."

The little gunman went over all that Shard had said, rapidly and succinctly.

"You have it straight," said Shard. "You must, however, follow my instructions and come out here several nights for the purpose of familiarizing yourself with the conditions and also with the man and his—ah—habits. Take your time. Do not act hastily. Be absolutely sure. There must be no blundering, my man."

"Leave it to me," said Vicky the Rat, as he stepped off the sidewalk to hail an approaching trolley car. "You'll wake up some fine morning and find you owe me eight hundred bones. Thanks for the match, mister."

He swung aboard the car, dropping into a rear seat, where, with an avid sigh, he lighted a cigarette.

"Gee, I've been missing you something terrible," he mused, fingering the cigarette lovingly as he drew in a great breath of smoke and eased it out luxuriously upon the rushing air.

A few days later Vicky again visited the Shard estate. This time he came in the dead of night, having traversed the thirty-odd miles in a swift-moving touring car. It was the middle of the week. He had ascertained that Mr. Shard was to be in the city "from Monday to Friday." He got out of the car a short distance below the small gate, spread some tools, a spare tire and a couple of inner tubes along the roadside, and then stole over the wall into the gloomy, starlit park.

HE had a double purpose in distributing these proofs of distress on the ground. First of all, to account for the presence of the temporarily abandoned car in the event that it attracted the attention of passers-by; and secondly, he was provided with an excuse for being on the Shard property at that hour of night in case he encountered any one while making his investigations. A very simple matter, reasoned Vicky, to explain his predicament and to wonder politely and apologetically if he could telephone from the house for a garage man to come and tow him down to the village for repairs.

But he encountered no one in his bold, brisk advance. Not until he was within a few rods of the house did he resort to stealth. Convinced that he had not as yet been observed, he slipped quickly [*Continued on page 114*]

Coming in McCLURE'S

Mr. Lee Wang
By Leslie Gordon
In which love and adventure link the streets of New York's Chinatown with the remote borders of Afghanista..

Who Laughs Last
By Douglas Z. Doty
A humorous story of horses, racing and desperate rivals in love

The Permanent Deputy
By Charles Wesley Sanders
A powerful mystery serial—an amateur detective of the Far West where the range is long and the aim is true

These Blind Boy Scouts

They Are Sightless but Have Magic in their Feet

Even doctors confess that they are puzzled by the marvelous "sixth sense" which trips, fell trees, pitch tents, run races, build fires and cook, using nerves

ACROSS a wide lawn, tree-studded, two boys were racing. If they don't look out, thought I, watching from a window, they'll crash into a tree trunk!

"Blind boys don't run into trees," said Herbert Hartung, instructor and Scoutmaster, as though replying to spoken words.

"Why?"

"They're Scouts—used to the open—and they've got magic in their feet."

We were looking from a classroom of the Pennsylvania Institution for Instruction of the Blind at Overbrook.

"Those blind Scouts," he went on "are just as able as boys who see. They go on hikes and camping trips, pitch tents, build fires, fell trees, cook—anything seeing boys can do. Sometimes I think they get along better than fellows with sight. Hearing, smell, touch and taste all become sharpened according to how long a lad's been blind. An uncanny sense of location that seems to spring from the subconscious helps amazingly.

"Then there's that 'cellular consciousness,' as Doctor J. Madison Taylor, a well-known alienist, calls it—a peculiar sensitiveness of the cheek nerves underneath the eyes, and the nerves in the soles of the feet—yes, even through thick boots. There seems no scientific explanation of it. Doctors themselves can only theorize about it."

Doctor Charles D. Hart, of Philadelphia, is consulting physician at the Institute and a member of the executive council of the Boy Scouts of America.

"Any one knows," says he, "that a blind person can detect the presence of a wall in front of him. Blind Boy Scouts, by developing this sensitiveness to looming obstacles, often know when they are near a rail fence, although an object which rises above the shoulder line is more easily recognized.

"One of our boys at the school lives in the fourth house in a long row. He never misses his front gate by an inch, although he says it is not by counting his steps or by approaching the house from the nearest corner. He walks straight down the long block to his door guided, he says, by a series of electric light supports near the curb.

"Not by touching them. He senses their presence subconsciously, and when he has passed the fourth one he turns in to his own house. The only explanation any blind boy can give of this phenomenon is that he has 'a thick feeling' in the forehead.

"In other words, there is a sense of increased density in the frontal sinuses or air chambers over the eyes and back of the nasal passages. This development, however, does not seem as important to me as the sense of muscle balance always noted in the blind—a form of acute sensitizing of the tactile or 'touch nerves' in the soles of the feet.

"Of course, balance is made up partly of this muscle control and partly of the control made possible by the sense of sight and its accompanying judgment of distance. When sight is lost, the first thing a blind person discovers is the difficulty of maintaining equilibrium when trying to stand or walk until Nature has had time to compensate for loss of eyes by increased sensitiveness in the tactile nerves in the feet. Experience with the Blind Scouts has shown me that this sensitiveness is astounding.

"The way the boys feel their way over rough country absolutely new to them is beyond comprehension. While on hikes I have often seen a running boy halt for an imperceptible fraction of a second at the edge of a gully, then step into and out of it with all the sure-footedness of a person with good eyes. He feels his way, but so swiftly that no hesitation is noticeable."

There is one exception, it seems, to this "footing" of the blind and that is when the snow falls. Snow is often called the "blind man's fog." It so blankets all the little roughnesses of the ground that the wonderful foot-soles become as useless as fingers that are encased in thick gloves.

The feet cannot get the touch-impressions. Lost is the "muscle-memory," which is only a form of the well-known highly sensitized touch of the blind.

Helen Keller, most famous deaf, dumb and blind woman in the world, once told me how she "saw" her way around her house and grounds. She described that "thick feeling" in the forehead when something loomed ahead. Through her interpreter and teacher, Annie Sullivan Macy, Helen explained that a house, a wall, a tree, even a thin pole, is just as "feelable" to her face,

"See" with Their Muscles

By Zoë Beckley

Photos from H. Parker Rolfe

permits the members of this troop of sightless youngsters to go on hikes and camping and "muscle sense" in the soles of their feet and faces in place of eyes

shoulders and arms as it is seeable to normal eyes. Even a seeing person, she pointed out, can tell in the dark when some one is standing close to him, or an obstacle blocks his path.

In London, once, I heard the late Sir Arthur Pearson, friend and teacher of war-blinded soldiers, tell a class how various thoroughfares could be recognized by difference in sound waves. The Strand "feels closer to you" than High Holborn. Shaftsbury Avenue "sounds" wider than Oxford Street. Piccadilly Circus is "hollower" than Oxford Circus.

The little blind Scouts of Overbrook have so sharpened this sense of detection that games of tag on the lawn, with never a stumble, "flop" or collision, are the merest "baby stuff" to them. As you watch they do not appear to hesitate, yet every instant they are feeling their way by means of those delicate nerves of the face and the swift-working muscle-memory, which combine into a sort of subconscious mental retention of the location of anything once felt with hands or feet.

Remarkable Achievements of Troop 118

THE two lads who had been racing on the lawn were called in to tell the lady how they could tear around that way with all the confidence and sure-footedness of sighted boys.

One of them, Donald Burns, fifteen, had just been tending his chicken house.

"Why, it isn't a bit wonderful," said Donald, with a deprecatory grin. "We just get to know where things are. If people don't move things around—like in the chicken run where I have every pail and broom and pan just where I want it—it's as easy for us to *feel* where we're going and what we're doing, as for you to *see* it. And it's easier," he added with a sweet-natured frankness that struck to my heart, "for us fellows who never did see than for the ones who went blind when they were older. They miss sight more and it takes them longer to have confidence."

Donald expects to be a chicken farmer when he grows up. He thinks it is rather an ideal business for a chap who can't see.

The other boy, Vincent Greco, has not decided what he will go in for. Both belong to Troop 118 of the Philadelphia Boy Scouts, which is the blind-boy troop from the Overbrook school. The troop was organized in 1912, eleven youngsters qualifying as tenderfoot Scouts.

For the past seven years Herbert Hartung has been Scoutmaster and instructor. He himself is partly blind—cannot see to read or to recognize a face across a table. Yet for sixteen years he has taught crafts in the Institute classrooms and led his pupils on hikes and campings.

Since Scout-Troop 118 was formed, several hundred members have passed through it, all the original group having grown up and their places been taken by younger boys. At present there are sixteen, of ages between 14 and 17. Some have absolutely no vision. A few can distinguish light from dark and see large objects dimly. All have less than 10 per cent of vision, or they could not be in the school. Fifty per cent of the pupils are totally blind—cannot see the sun by looking at it. No one under twelve can join the Blind Boy Scouts.

Nine of the present sixteen are First Classers. That is, they know the Morse Code, can take and send messages, do a certain amount of cooking, know woodcraft, first aid and principles of personal hygiene. They can put up and take down a tent, are able to do a hike of fourteen miles with another boy or boys and write a description of it on the typewriter. In addition, the blind Scout must take the regular examinations for all Scouts. Several of Troop 118 sport badges for particular work—firemanship, perhaps, which means knowing what to do in case of fire or accident through fire. Or mechanical ability, or craftsmanship of some kind.

No blind Scout has yet been an Eagle—the highest title any Scout can earn. There are twenty-three examinations necessary to pass the test for Eagleship, including driving an automobile, traveling by astronomical calculation, etc.—accomplishments obviously unachievable to the sightless.

Three and sometimes four-day camping trips happen at least once each year, but many nights in summertime

Start of a foot race by blind boys. Note guide wires along the track held by the boys

the boys sleep out of doors in tents loaned or given by friends. The boys pick corn and tomatoes from the school garden, help buy other necessaries by the contribution of a nickel each, and tramp off with their plunder to the spot where tents are to be pitched and cots made ready.

They gather firewood, bring water from the stream, husk the corn, chop the wood and even feed the fire. There has never been a boy hurt, says Mr. Hartung, on one of these trips though "they often fall about a bit."

Here is an account written by Harry Ditzler, a typical husky blind Boy Scout, describing an outing:

"Our party was composed of the Scoutmaster, two assistants and sixteen boys. It was our first experience in camping and we were crazy to find out what it would bring.

"We left at half-past nine for Mr. Thomson's farm to have a two-day trip. Each fellow had his blanket on his back. The other things were brought in an auto. We had no trouble finding the way because arrows were painted on trees for the Scoutmaster to follow and sometimes directions in Braille were up, that even us boys could read.

"First we got the tents ready, and after everything was fixed for the night we began to explore our surroundings with great interest. Most interesting was the brook. Some of us fell in of course, but picked ourselves out, laughing. We soon learned its width, depth and direction, its rocky bottom and the trees along its banks.

"We ate supper, which wasn't much of a task after a five-mile hike. It threatened rain so they thought it better for us to sleep in the haymow of Mr. Thomson's barn instead of in the tents.

"Right after supper the happiest time of all came. We sat round the fire singing and listening to stories—Mr. Cowing's ghost story was the best! We had heaps of fun in the hay and it was eleven

Photos from H. Parker Rolfe

"Telltales"—a fringe of ropes which strike the face of the runner, telling him the end of the course is reached

o'clock before we finally quieted down and got to sleep.

"Next morning everybody was up early, anxious to see what was doing. Breakfast was ready soon, and we fell to with good appetites. After the washing up was done we set out on a hike.

"I learned heaps of things I never heard of before. I never knew you could tell how old a tree is by counting the rings on the stump. Or how to make a compass out of your watch. We learned to tell beech trees by the smooth, even surface; and the difference between the poplar and the hickory by the softness of the bark on one, and the rough, harsh bark on the other. We learned to tell the points of the compass by moss on the trunks of trees."

The same Scoutmaster Cowing, whose ghost story had been so appreciated the night before, made a suggestion that the boys be allowed to roam through the woods at will, making such discoveries as came their way and calling out the names of trees they met. This made lots

of fun and brought out some originality in identification. One fellow shouted that he had found a pin oak and when asked to prove it said: "The leaves and branches are exactly like the ones on the school lawn." Than which no better proof was needed.

On the return from one of Troop 118's camp trips, the whole company marched to Franklin Field to join 2,500 other Scouts in seeing the University of Pennsylvania and LaFayette College play their annual game. Blind Scouts enjoy football and take part often in a modified game at the Institute as a regular part of their athletic work. It is chiefly a kicking game, complexities of running and tackling being eliminated. But when they "see" a real game, very little escapes them.

Track races, dashes, etc. are quite an everyday thing with the Blind Scouts. They have both an indoor and an outdoor track at Overbrook, and no one watching them compete with seeing boys could guess that the members of Troop 118 were blind, unless they noted on either side of the running path the wires upon which small guide wires to be held in the hands of the runners are strung on loose-sliding rings. Near the finish, "telltales" are hung, just as above railway tracks to warn train crews of a bridge ahead—a fringe of ropes which strike the face of the runner, telling him the end of the course is reached.

It is amazing to see with what speed and confidence the Blind Scouts fly along the track, nothing betraying their sightlessness unless it is the guiding wire and, to the close observer, that tendency to tilt the face upward as though to give those sensitized nerves beneath the eyes full chance to help the flying feet.

Willetta Huggins, Wisconsin's famous blind prodigy, and Scoutmaster Hartung

When the Overbrook Scouts go on a several-day hike their gift for "seeing" with other than eyes makes every inch of the camp site interesting. A boy with good eyes would take in the situation at a glance. Not so the Overbrook Scout, who has a hundred thrills of discovery awaiting him—of touch, of taste, of smell. The blind boys often speak of how things "scent"—the air before a snowstorm, the breath from a distant wood or stream, an animal approaching, or a certain kind of tree being passed.

If a stream or pond is within reach, camp is pitched near it, swimming being No. 118's prime delight. In connection with this sport that odd thing called muscle-memory has its best and most amazing demonstration.

"The blind boy," says Mr. Hartung, "goes into the water just like his seeing brother. He drags off his clothes and drops them apparently haphazard on the bank. But it is not haphazard. After his dive and his water-stunts each lad scampers unerringly to his own little pile of garments. The sensitive soles have 'remembered' every tiny dip and bump in the bank and transmitted it to the brain. I wish I could describe it to you better," adds the Scoutmaster, "but not even Doctor Hart can tell you how it functions, or the physiology or psychology of it. Not even the boys themselves can. It works like instinct and is accepted in the same way.

"Swimming, cross-country trots and athletic meets work wonders in giving the boys self-reliance. We like to get them away from instructors and friends as often as possible. So long as sightless boys must depend on some one for guidance, they stay shy and sensitive and hesitate to undertake things."

Not long ago on the grounds of the Institute, the Blind Scouts felled and cut into logs for the fireplace a dead tree more than two feet in diameter at the base!

The instructors have become so confident and so used to the students doing regular-boy things that they stand by perfectly unconcerned while eight or ten youngsters tackle a job like that, swinging their axes with all the assurance of sighted persons. The blind boy always knows he has a clear space before he starts to swing. And nobody ever gets hurt.

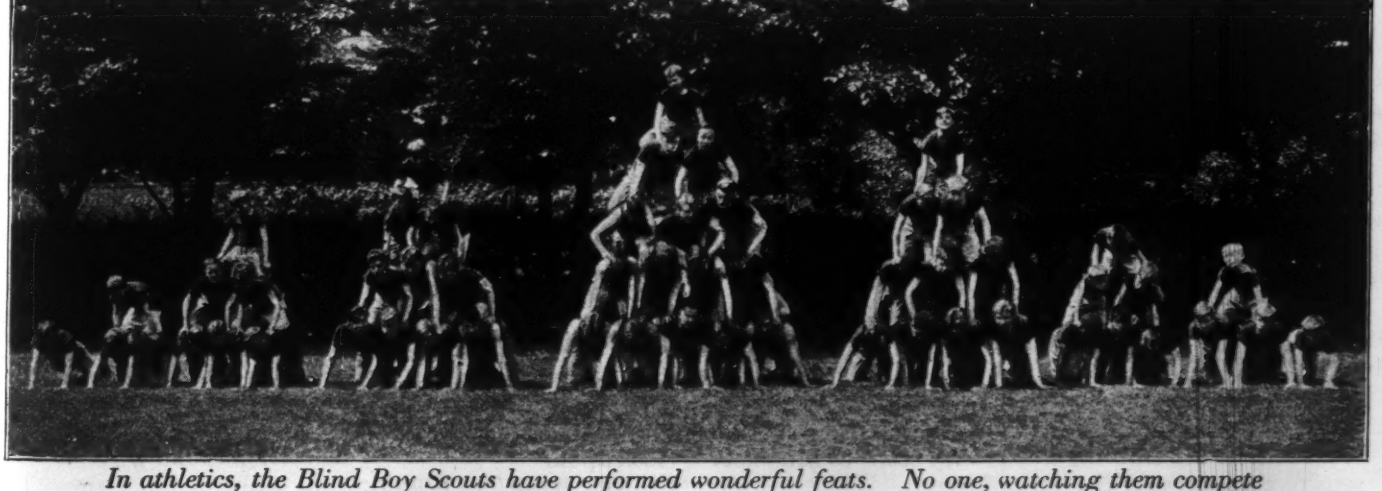
Part of every outing is the "mile test in running" which the Troopers of 118 love. Here is an account written by Raymond Munis, totally blind!

"Right after breakfast and putting camp in order, we started to pass off our mile test. We ran over a country road; uphill and then down again, and then over rough gravel places. We did not want to pick out the smoothest and best mile we could find, for this would be no test of our ability to run the mile in twelve minutes.

"Later in the morning after many of us had passed the test, we decided we would each make a separate fire and cook our own dinner.

"This would be another test passed toward second-class scouting. We set to work, gathered our wood and soon we each had a good fire. It looked funny to see so

Photo from H. Parker Rolfe



In athletics, the Blind Boy Scouts have performed wonderful feats. No one, watching them compete with seeing boys, could guess that they were sightless

Photo from H. Parker Rolfe

Blind boys can swing their axes with all the assurance of sighted persons. They always know there is a clear space ahead before they start to swing—and nobody ever gets hurt!

many different fires scattered about on the camp grounds. We each cooked our own dinner and enjoyed it lots. After enjoying the ice cream Doctor Hart sent us, we went for a good swim. We had a grand time in the boat and water and felt refreshed after the afternoon of good fun and sport.

"Next day our good friend Doctor Hart originated a treasure-hunt game for the whole troop. It was great, although some boys in their excitement fell into the brook. Along the way we found Brailled directions tacked to trees which we were all able to follow. After tramping through fields, over fences and streams, we came at last to a small cave—and here a knife was found. Benjamin Sobel was the lucky scout and the jackknife treasure was his!"

Democracy and Self-Reliance of the Blind Scouts

DOCTOR HART is one of several big-hearted Philadelphians who take special interest in the Overbrook Scouts and do things for them.

Hugh B. Sutherland, of the Philadelphia *North American*, has more than once footed it with the Overbrooksters. Several years ago he wrote for his paper an account of a trip. His surprise at seeing the boys stampede forth for their hike with him is thus expressed:

"And those blind boys coming down the stairs just as fast as if they could see every step! And with no handrail! Khaki-clad, leggined and service-hatted, they're off across the green meadow.

" 'Fence!' shouts the scoutmaster, who is eyes for the troop. And over, under and through the rails they climb without hesitation.

" 'Railroad!' again comes a warning. In an instant the troop had got the 'step' of the ties, and not one stumbled. Then into the woods with stops to run supersensitive fingers over the bark of trees.

"As they marched along, Doctor Hart told them the past story of the fields and hills and waterways roundabout—historic ground rich in memories of deeds that went into the foundation of a nation. Oh, you who have eyes to see, can you fully measure what it means to these sightless boys to be thus brought next to two beginnings—the cradle of all things, the soil, and the birthground of a great experiment in democracy!"

Democracy and self-reliance are not mere words to the Blind Scouts of Overbrook, but are things lived up to daily. They know no barriers of race or color. Two-by-two you see them everywhere—in the beautiful grounds of the Institute, in classrooms, workrooms, chapel.

And self-reliance? Well, it need only be told that most of the Blind Scouts pay for their uniforms and have pocket-money by caning chairs, making baskets, shoveling snow, cutting lengths of firewood for the residents of Overbrook and delivering their wares at the doors.

Scoutmaster Hartung says the boys learn resourcefulness in their outdoor life more quickly than in any other way. And that the blind boy finds a sweet personal friendship in every tree and flower, hill and pool of water, that seeing boys scarcely can know.

Certainly there is a sunny good nature about your Blind Scout that is sensed by the most casual visitor to Overbrook.

As the boy said who piloted me down the long path and flight of steps to the taxi chugging at the gate:

"It isn't that we wouldn't like to see if we could, but we don't consider having one sense less than other fellows a thing to feel hopeless about. There's so much you can do without eyes if only you don't get to pitying yourself! Scouting helps more than anything else. Good-by; it's been fine to see you," he said, with a whimsical emphasis on the "see" and a wide, kid-like smile that was good to look upon.

One sense *less*, he said.

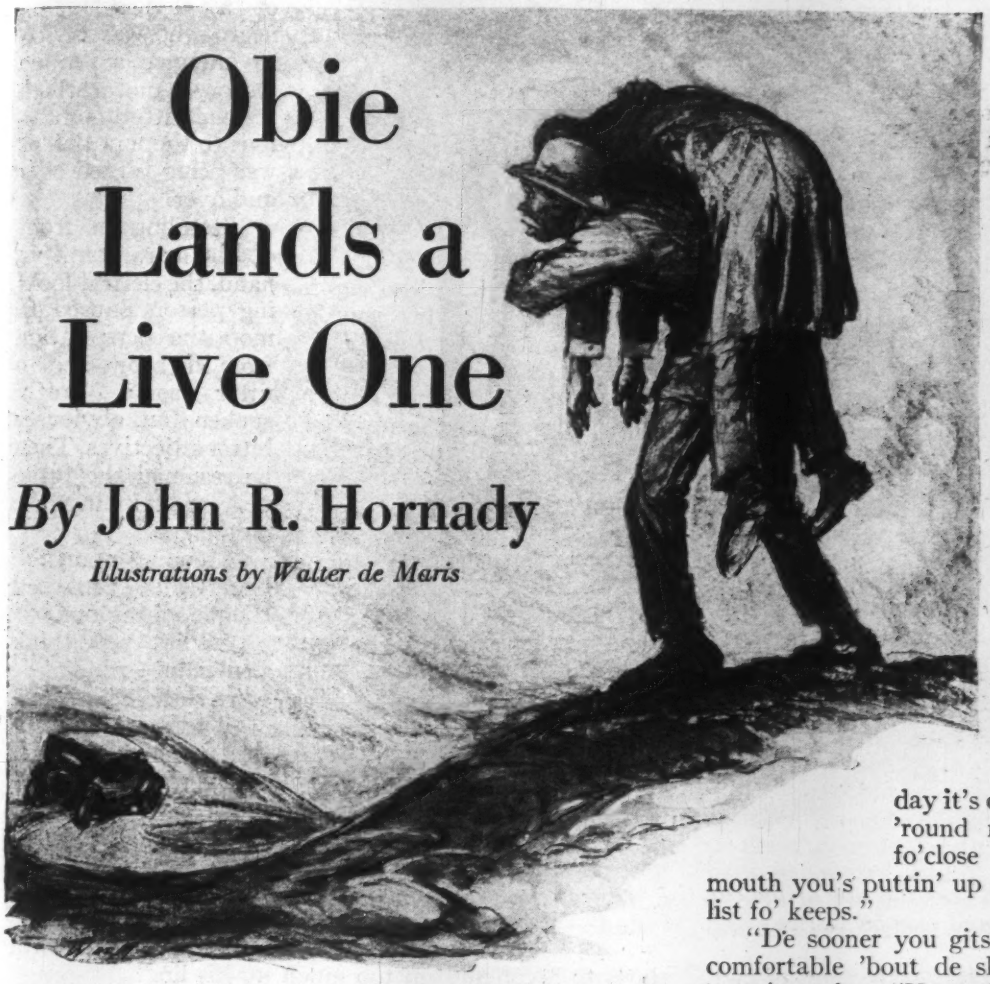
I wonder if they haven't a sense *more!*

Misfortune Rides with Mistah Shorter to a Prison Cell in —

Obie Lands a Live One

By John R. Hornady

Illustrations by Walter de Maris



Obie hoisted the lifeless form of his employer to his shoulder and strode back to the car

SAUNTERING up to the desk, the dusky guest tossed thereon the key to his room and was turning away when the clerk called, "Mistah Shorter, here's a note in your box," and handed over an envelope bearing the imprint of the hotel company.

Opening the missive as he strolled out upon the sunlit street, the recipient found it to be short, crisp and free from any suspicion of ambiguity. It read:

"MR. OBADIAH SHORTER:

We calls your attention to the rule of this hotel which requires prompt payment of bills at the end of the week. You are a day overdue. Please call at the cashier's window and settle same without no delay.

ABE WILLIAMS, Manager."

When he had absorbed the contents of this communication, the delinquent guest turned about and made his way to the office of the manager.

"Glad to see you, Mistah Shorter, Ah hopes you is well," said the manager suavely.

"Thank you, Mistah Williams," replied Obie. "Ah hopes you is de same. Ah's doin' mighty fine in body, but mah pocket am in a temporaneous state of co-lapse. Fact is, a re-mittance Ah's been lookin' for frum mah agent in 'Tlanta ain't come an' mah finances is run so low Ah 'lowed Ah'd ax you to loan me a ten until mah funds arrives."

The face of Manager Williams hardened and a frosty note crept into his voice as he answered:

"Ah'd like mighty well to 'commodate you, Mistah Shorter, but de rules uv de house am again' any sech proceedin', an' what's mo', de rent on dis hotel am now due an' Ah's got to pay it or git out. So, in view uv dese 'ventualities, Ah specks you to pay what's due an' Ah specks you to do it today."

"Den you' spectations is due to hit a snag," replied Obie, producing two quarters and a half dollar, which he fondled in the palm of his hand. "Dis am de full an' entire extent uv mah fortune at de present moment, an' until Ah gits mah remittance, Ah pays nuthin'. What's more, if Ah can't git a triflin' ad-vance from de house, den it's off mah callin' list. Ah won't patronize no bunch uv tight-wads nor no hotel what's goin' broke if it don't collect nine dollars de day it's due. Ah don' want to be hangin' 'round no place de sheriff's 'bout to fo'close on, an' you kin store de pore mouth you's puttin' up or strike me off you' customers' list fo' keeps."

"De sooner you gits off de list de sooner Ah'll feel comfortable 'bout de sheriff not gittin' me," was the caustic reply. "You talks like one uv dem glib-mouth agents whut sells Bibles full uv nigger angels, an' you' slick gab don't go wid me. Ah's willin' to take a sportin' chance when de odds is even, but trustin' you is jes' like goin' down de bay an' fishin' fo' trout wid a empty hook. So, dar ain't nuthin' doin' now nor no time."

"You talk about takin' a sportin' chance! De only sportin' chance you'd take would be to grab de contents uv a blind man's cup on a empty street, an' Ah's goin' to show you up right now. What Ah proposes is to match you for whut Ah owes you an' five dollars on de side. If Ah loses Ah pays you double rent an' five dollars; if you loses, de room account is square an' you gives me five dollars."

"Whut for Ah wants you to owe me five dollars an' double whut you owes me now? You mus' think Ah's a hog for losin' money."

"Ah got a gold watch here whut says Ah's good for more den double whut Ah owes you," retorted Obie, producing his timepiece, "an' Ah puts it up as a guarantee uv mah end uv de pot."

MANAGER Williams took the watch and examined it critically, finding it to be just the sort of timepiece he would like to have, since it was a thin model, while his own was of a more ancient type.

"Well, if you puts up de watch, Ah goes you," he said.

"All right," replied Obie, running his forefinger over the coins in his hand. "You call it: heads or tails, an' one throw decides de issue."

"Heads," said the manager promptly. Obie took one of the coins and flipped it above the desk. It fell, spun for an instant, and settled down, tails up.

The terrified Mr. Stout passed over the side of the car. Obie heard a thud, a cry, and was on his way

"You loses," was Obie's succinct statement of fact.

The manager slowly produced a five-dollar bill from his pocket and handed it over, together with the watch, saying:

"Dis is you' lucky day, niggah, an' you' rent am paid for de past week, but when it's due nex' time you pays in cash an' not wid availin' prayers to Old Man Luck. By de way," he added, "lemme see dat quarter whut you jes' flung."

WITHOUT the slightest hesitation, Obie handed over the coin and a moment later the manager gave a howl:

"Why, dis coin ain't got nuthin' *but* tails—it's tails on top an' tails on de bottom. Whut you got to say to dat?"

"All Ah got to say is dat if de coin has tails on both sides, den it's prezactly de one Ah 'lowed Ah used."

"But suppose Ah'd called tails?"

"Den Ah'd 'a' used de one whut's all heads. I got 'em to fit all emergencies. Ah fixed 'em up to use on tight-wads, an' am here to say dat Ah never has used 'em to no better ad-vantage den when Ah sprung dat one on you. Howsomever, Ah ain't got no 'tention uv beatin' you outer dat lodgin' bill, nor uv takin' you' five. Ah's jes forcin' a courtesy due one gent'eman frum anoder, an' now, havin' did it, Ah bids you a pleasant good mornin'." With a sweeping bow, Obie sauntered out of the office, leaving the manager too much aghast for speech.

Obie strolled down to the bay front just in time to witness the arrival of one of the little steamers which ply between Mobile and Fairhope, and he paused to watch the passengers file off upon the wharf. While thus engaged, his attention was attracted by the conduct of a clerical-looking negro who was trying to energize a stalled motor—a motor which seemed utterly oblivious to the fact that it was being turned over and over.

Standing in front of the car, crank in hand, the clerical-looking person paused to mop the perspiration from his brow, and to utter some softly spoken but obviously bitter adjectives. Then he resumed the futile task of spinning the motor.

Stepping upon the boat, Obie approached the perspiring one.

"What you think you' doin'—windin' de town clock?" he asked.

The negro thus addressed straightened up and replied witheringly:

"No, Ah's jes' takin' mah mornin' exercise pre-para-tory to knockin' de head offa any nigger whut starts to favor me wid too much uv his lip."

"Won't she fire?" pursued Obie, whose knowledge of cars was intuitive, and who was never happy in the presence of one that failed to hum sweetly.

"Of cou'se she'll fire! Don't you hear 'er hittin' on all cylinders?" was the sarcastic answer. "Dat en-gine never needs nothin' but a pat on de back an' a stick uv dynamite to make 'er go."

"If dat en-gine's a-hittin' Ah's a candidate fur de def an' dum' school," said Obie. "What she ain't got is no spark."

"You reckon you could git 'er goin'?" asked the darky, a glad light of hope in his small and shifty eyes.

"If anything is under dat hood 'cep' a vac-um Ah kin make 'er run," said Obie confidently, lifting the cover and running a speculative eye over the engine. "Whut 'sylum has dey got de man in whut trusted you wid dis here car?" he asked, after the examination.

"Dat ain't nobody's car but mine," retorted his companion, "an' Ah ain't had no trouble wid it 'cept de en-gine stays stopped when Ah stops it."

"Well, if it was mah car, dat would be trouble enough to satisfy me," replied Obie, beginning to clean connections and tighten loose nuts.

"Ah ain't seen it break no records since you began to projec' wid it. If you know such a much, make it talk."

For answer, Obie stepped to the side of the car and gave the starter a poke with his thumb. After an experimental cough or two the motor began to hit with a fair degree of regularity.

"Well, Ah'll be jiggered!" exclaimed the owner. "How does you do it?"

"Huh," replied Obie, speaking with fine scorn. "Ah's

de man whut taught de first en-gine how to walk. Ah's nussed 'em through de conva-lescence an' brought de dead to life. En-gines knows me like dey knows dey own bearin's an' when Ah says go, dey goes, an' when Ah says stop, dey stops."

"Does you live 'round heah?" the stranger inquired, examining Obie with increased interest.

"No, 'Tlanta's my home place."

"Whut you doin' heah?"

"Ah ain't doin' nuthin' 'cep' git done since Ah cum to dis man's town."

"Want to leave?"

"Ain't nuthin' holdin' me 'cep' a hotel bill."

"Well, how 'bout goin' long wid me as de driver?"

"You sho' needs one. Which way you headed for?"

"Loui'ville."

"Ah ain't los' nuthin' up in dat place."

"Get in de car an' let's proj-ect it over, anyhow. You take de driver's seat 'til we gits whar we kin confabulate."

OBIE climbed into the car and a moment later rolled across the wharf and into the street, experiencing a keen sense of exhilaration at feeling the pressure of the throttle beneath his foot.

"Whut Ah needs," the stranger was saying, "is a driver whut knows sumpin' 'bout a car 'cep' bearin' down on de gas. Any fool kin do dat."

"Yes, sah. I 'spect you knows," replied Obie.

"An' when Ah finds de man Ah wants, Ah's willin' to pay him han'some," continued the stranger, ignoring the interruption.

"You sho' is talkin' melogious now," said Obie. "Dat word pay is got more music to it dan a whole flock of self-playin' pi-anos. How much you 'spect to give a expert driver an' mechanicer, such as Ah is — huh?"

"Four dollars a day an' found."

"Whut kinder found?"

"Same as Ah gits. You stops at de same hotels an' eats uv de same vi'tuals."

"And you foots de bills?"

"Perzactly."

"When is you figerin' on startin'?"

"Ah's ready now if you's ready."

"Well, Ah's ready to go, but de hotel man will sho' be pow'rful regretful 'bout lettin' me leave 'til Ah's paid him dat fourteen dollars Ah's due him."

"Well, we kin simplificate dat by mah payin' you a week in advance," said the owner of the car, putting a large hand in a bulging pocket. When part of the roll he drew out was in Obie's long-empty wallet, he drove the car around to the hotel, where he astonished the manager by paying him in full.

"Ah hopes," he said to that individual, in handing over the money, "dat dis will be a lesson to you, an' de nex' time a gent'eman of large financial resourcefulness abides hisself at you' hostelry you will pay de re-spect dat is due one uv ex-alted position."

"Yes, sah, Mistah Shorter, Ah sho' will, an' Ah's pow'ful sorry you' 'gagements is carryin' you away. Is dat you' car out by de curb?"

"No, dat belongs to mah fiskal agent," replied Obie, as he followed the bell boy and saw his baggage deposited safely in the rear of the car.

"Mah name is W. B. Stout," said the clerical-looking person, when Obie had resumed his place at the wheel and put the car in motion.

"Ah's sho' glad to learn you's got one," said Obie. "A name beats a number all hollow."

This answer brought a startled look to the shifty eyes of Mr. Stout, but an examination of Obie's passive face convinced him that the remark was without sinister meaning, and he let it pass.

"What might be you' cog-no-men?" he asked.

"Ah ain't got any. Ah sold mah car when Ah went broke about a month ago."

"Ah mean whut's you' name?"

"Oh, Ah was busy wid de gears an' mistook de nature uv de question you impounded. Mah name's Shorter—Obadiah Shorter."

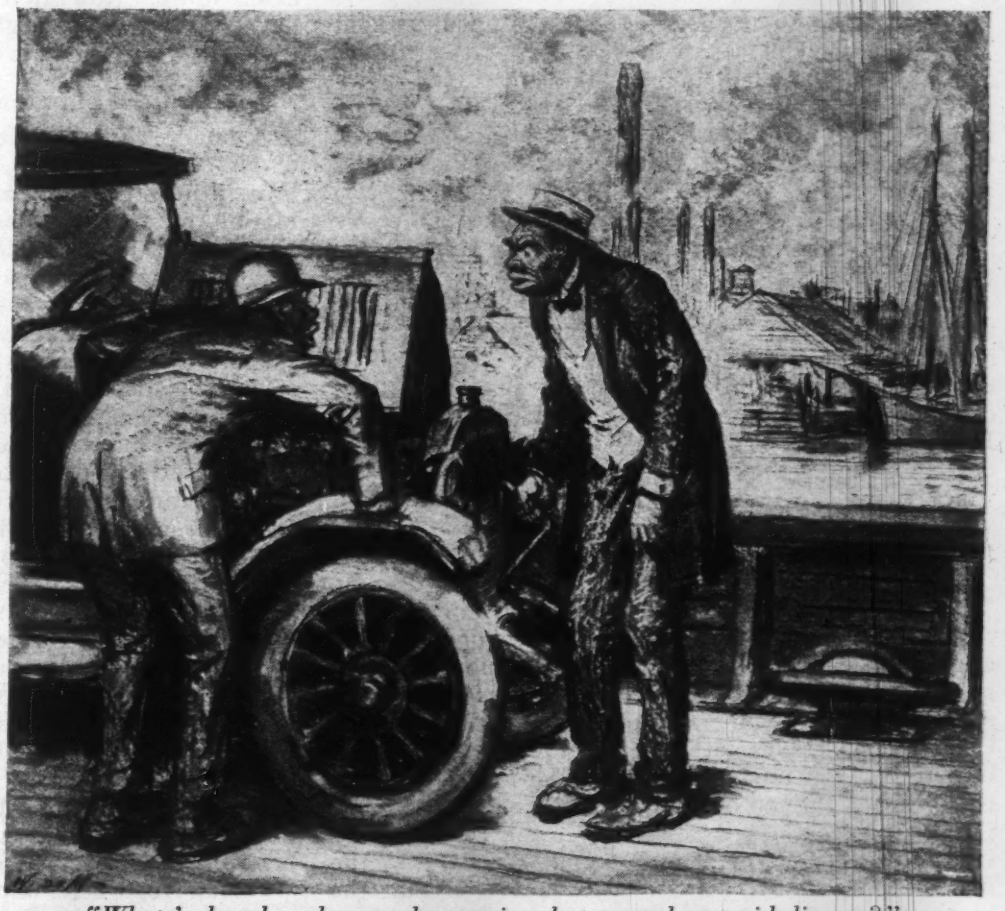
"Well, Mistah Shorter, at de commencement uv our relations, Ah wants to inform you dat Ah has jus' a few ex-entrickities."

"Is dey stored in de back uv de car?"

"No; what Ah means is dat Ah's got whut some folks might think is queer notions."

"Like dat you kin drive a car?"

"No, not dat. Let me 'lucidate. For one thing, Ah's mortaly 'posed to hangin' 'round in big towns. Ah hates de noise uv de traffic an' de pushin' an' de crowdin'. Ah likes de country, wid its solitude an' its quiet, so Ah will ax you to git us outer dis town, wid our noses p'inted toward Loui'ville, an' follow de unbeated paths."



"Whut 'sylum has dey got de man in whut trusted you wid dis car?" asked Obie, after a hasty examination of the engine

"All right, whut you says goes, but Ah wants to 'form you dat when you gits off de beaten paths in dis part uv de country you is mostly in de ditch. De fact am, some uv de best paths on de way we's goin' needs a whole lot more beaten dan dey gits, dey's so plum' rotten."

"AH gathers you' meanin', Mistah Shorter, but mah 'structions is to follow de lonesomest way."

"All right, you's de boss, an' Ah calculate from de way you effervesces dat you's got plenty uv money to buy mo' cars as fast as we wears 'em out. So we'll push on through de river bottoms an' go by way uv Whistler, Vinegar Bend, Thomasville, Selma and Jemison into Bummin'ham."

"How come you know all dem places?"

"Law, man, Ah's been drivin' cars for fifteen year, an' de place Ah ain't been, ain't."

"Ain't Bummin'ham a pretty big town?"

"De folks dere thinks it is, but we 'Tlanta citizens knows better. We got 'em beat 'bout twenty thousand."

"Wait a minit, niggah. You means to tell me Bummin'ham is mos' as big as 'Tlanta?"

"No, whut Ah aims to tell you is it ain't."

"Well, Ah got dis to say, it's entirely too big for me, an' Ah requests you to cut it offen our callin' list."

"How come?"

"Ain't Ah done tol' you big places gits on mah nerves?"

"Well, Ah believes you did, an' all Ah's got to say is dat if you 'spects to git to Loui'ville widout passin' through no big towns, you better trade dis piece uv junk off for a flyin' machine an' git you another driver, 'case Ah's gwinter stay on de ground."

"How come?"

" 'Case mighty few roads runs through them mountains an' them whut does is got sense enough to go whar de folks is at."

"Well, when we hits dem big towns, you flank 'round 'em de best you kin, 'case mah nerves is in tatters an' Ah don' want to 'spose 'em no mo'n Ah has to."

"Wide an' lonesome, eh? All right, wide an' lonesome it'll be," replied Obie. "But Ah wants to say dat yo' bones is gwinter be shattered wuss'en yo' nerves before dis journey is ovah."

A few minutes later they left the smoke of the city behind, and turned into the highway that stretched on toward Whistler.

Avoiding the main thoroughfares as much as possible and bumping painfully over out-of-the-way roads, Obie and his employer slowly made their way north, and on the evening of the third day reached Jemison and rolled out upon the Bee-Line Highway extending south from Birmingham. Bumping along an ill-kept stretch through Shelby County, they finally reached the long bridge which spans the Cahaba and once across this stream were upon a roadway whose unbroken surface proclaimed their presence in Jefferson County.

"WE'S comin' to Bummin'ham now," said Obie, as he permitted his foot to come down upon the gas, and began the long climb up Shades Mountain. "We kin skirt 'round de town an' be on our way inside uv fifty minutes, 'less you craves to spen' de night."

"Ah don't craves nothin' in dat town 'cept to hab it behind me," was the terse reply, and silence reigned until they reached the top of the mountain and started down the other side, which is almost sheer and is marked by swift descents and numerous hairpin curves. On the first of these reverse curves, Obie discovered that the brakes had become practically useless, and the machine whirled dizzily around the bend, making it on two wheels and continuing its flight at increasing speed.

"Hey, whut you doin'?" yelled the terrified Mr. Stout. "Cut out dat speedin' or you gwinter land us in de lap uv de undertaker."

"Whut you gwinter cut it out wid?" was Obie's pointed question, as he tried to shove the gears into low. "Dis pile uv junk ain' got no more brakes dan a bolt uv lightnin', an' if you knows any prayers, you better be sayin' 'em while Ah tries to steer us 'round de nex' bend."

"We ain' got no brakes?" cried the horrified owner. "Whut yo' gwinter do den?"

" 'Tain't no question whut Ah's gwinter do," replied Obie. "What Ah wants to know is whut dis wreck gwinter do to us when it takes a notion to jump off down in de valley."

By this time they were on another of the sharp reverse curves and were saved only by the skill of the driver, plus the high pitch of the roadway. As they straightened out for another dip, the terrified Mr. Stout cried:

"Well, here's whar Ah leaves you, 'case Ah ain't gwinter take no chances on bein' throwed a million miles down one uv dem cliffs, an' lan' wid a automobile on de back uv my neck!" A moment thereafter he passed over the side of the car, and was lost to view. Obie heard a thud, a cry, and was on his way.

At the next curve the roadway was flanked by a high dirt embankment, which rose abruptly, and, exercising infinite skill, Obie eased the car against this bank, increasing the pressure as the momentum was halted. Finally he shoved the gears into low and the car was brought to a stop. Climbing to the roadway, he wiped the perspiration from his brow and muttered softly:

"Ah ain't never gwinter cast no mo' 'spersions ag'in' luck, 'case she sho' wuz wid dis chile dis time; snatched me right outen de mouth uv death while de jaws wuz closin' down. Now Ah'll see how many pieces is lef' uv dat fool nigger whut oughter knowed better 'an to mistrust my drivin' an' dive ober de side like he done."

AFTER walking back upon the highway for about a hundred yards, Obie came upon the prostrate form of his companion. He was crumpled up, motionless, in a little ditch that paralleled the highway. Seizing him by the shoulder, Obie cried:

"Hey, git up from dat ditch! De car'iage waits widout, by which Ah means it's still widout brakes." But this bit of pleasantry was lost on the prostrate one.

Dropping to his knees, Obie made a hasty examination of the darky, and as he did so he felt a distinct chill steal up his spinal column.

"It sho' looks like Ah got a corpse on mah hands," he muttered in awed tones, "an' heah Ah is, 'way out in de woods wid nuthin' but hootin' owls fer company. Still, Ah can't leave him here, an' bein' as corpses can't walk, Ah guess Ah'll hab to tote him down to de car. Ah oughter stayed in Mo-bile, anyhow."

Obie hoisted the lifeless form to his shoulder and experienced a gratifying sense of relief as the movement brought a groan from the injured man.

"He ain' turned to no ha'nt, anyhow!" ejaculated Obie, and strode back to the car.

Placing the body of his employer on the floor of the tonneau, Obie resumed the driver's seat and, by careful driving, managed to reach a high shelf overlooking the city of Birmingham. Pausing more to consider his next step than to admire the beauty of the scene spread before him, Obie muttered:

"Now Ah's here, whut Ah gwinter do? What Ah needs is a hos-pital, an' Ah guess de bes' thing Ah kin do is to go down to de city jail an' see if dey kin fix me

up wid one." Having reached this decision, Obie once more shoved the gears in low, made the descent in safety, and presently came to a halt at the entrance to the city jail.

Though he had an instinctive aversion for institutions of this character, Obie eased his way into the gloomy structure and addressed the night warden:

"Boss, Ah's got a nigger out here whut needs a doctor."

"What's the matter with him?" yawned the warden.

"Well, we wuz comin' down de mountain an' foun' we didn't hab no brakes, an' when we got to goin' about a hundred miles an 'our, he loses confi-dence in mah drivin' an' jumps out."

"Sorter nervous temperament, eh?" smiled the warden.

"Yas, sah, Ah reckon so, but all his temper been knocked outen him now."

Followed by the warden and two patrolmen, who had just brought in a late catch, Obie led the way into the alley and pointed to the unconscious Stout.

"Dat's him," he said, "an' he ain't spoke a word since he jumped outen de car."

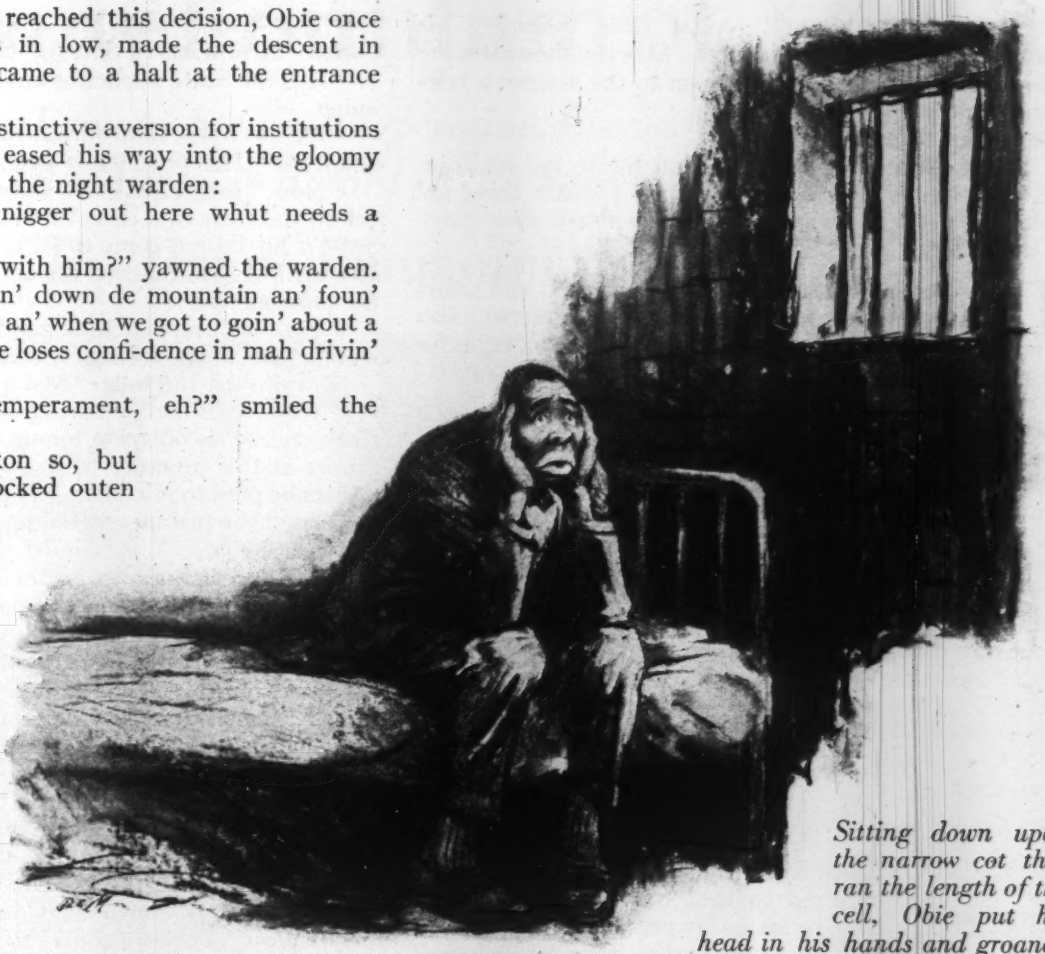
The injured man was carried into the office and stretched out upon a cot and then a telephone call was put in for the police surgeon. And presently one of the patrolmen began to compare his features with a picture on a circular that he produced from his wallet.

"I'll bet my gun to a tin sword that this nigger is Doc West," he said, addressing his fellow officer.

"You don't say?" ejaculated the other.

"Yes, look at his face and then at this picture."

"By Jove, you're right! It's him, all right."



Sitting down upon the narrow cot that ran the length of the cell, Obie put his head in his hands and groaned

TURNING to the warden, the officer who had identified Stout said:

"Hold this man. He is wanted in a dozen places." Then, "Where did you take up with this man?" he demanded of Obie.

"Ah met 'im comin' off'n de boat down to Mobile."

"Wasn't you with him over in Georgia?"

"No, sah. Ah never seen nor hearn tell uv him 'till Ah met him in Mobile an' he hired me to drive his car."

"What's your name?"

"Obadiah Shorter."

"Where are you from?"

"Mah home place is 'Tlanta."

"Well, well. Here you admit you are from Georgia and you're accompanied by a man who's been committing more crimes in that State than a dog has fleas, and yet you pretend you were not with him over there. You can tell that stuff to the judge." Thereupon the officer addressed the warden once more. "Hold this man as an accomplice of Doc West," he ordered, and made out a slip committing Obie to the mercy of the jailer.

"You ain' talkin' 'bout me, is you?" asked the horrified Obie.

"Oh, no, not at all—at all; his reference was to the King of Siam," answered the warden, as he proceeded to docket a vagrancy charge against the prisoner as a temporary expedient, pending an investigation.

Too dazed for further speech, Obie was led to a heavy, steel-barred door, which opened into a dimly lighted corridor, and a moment later this door slammed behind him with a crash of steel bolts. He was then taken to a cell, and a second door of steel clanged behind him.

Sitting down upon the narrow metal cot in the cell, the prisoner placed his head in his hands and groaned.

"Well, dis sho' flabbergasts me, an' de nex' time Ah plays de fool and carries mah own self to jail, dey's welcome to hang me, 'case dar ain't gwinter be no nex' time. From now on, when dey wants Obie dey will sho' hafter send after him," he muttered, and then, stretching out upon the cot, forgot his troubles in sleep.

Early the next morning Obie rubbed his eyes and began to give serious thought to his predicament.

"Here Ah is in jail wid no friends an' mighty little money, an' no mo' notion whut dey's got me fur dan a hummin' bird. It might be robbery an' it might be bootleggin' an' it might be murder, none of which Ah's done, but not doin' don't mean not bein' in jail," he observed sagely, and a moment later he was engaged in compiling a telegram to Mr. Alfred Ponderson, police court attorney of Atlanta, whose skill in extracting darkies from difficult positions had become proverbial.

While he was struggling with the missive he noted with considerable relief the approach of one of the jailers, and, stepping to the door, hailed him:

"Mistah, Ah begs yo' pardon, but would you min' tellin' me whut dat word is dat takes de place uv 'help' in white folks' talk?"

"I don't get you," said the keeper.

"Like if you wuz hungry an' cold an' ailin', an' somebody done brung you whut you needs," explained Obie.

"Oh, yes, you mean 'succor.'"

"Yas, sah, dat's it; jes' de word Ah was lookin' for,

an' Ah's much o-bliged," replied Obie, resuming his labors with renewed confidence. Shortly thereafter he induced the same keeper to pass on to the warden a telegram, which read as follows:

"DEAR MR. PONDERSON:

This is Obie Shorter. They got me in jail in Bummin'ham falsely excused of sumthin' I don't know an' ain't done. Am broke an' no friends so please come quick to my sucker. OBIE."

THIS communication, coming from an old and sometimes profitable client, moved Mr. Ponderson first to laugh and then to act. He caught an evening train for Birmingham, and on the following morning presented himself at the city jail, where his polite request for an interview with Obadiah Shorter was granted. And soon Obie was pouring out the story of his meeting with Stout, of the journey, culminating in the accident on the mountain, and his trip to the jail, with its melancholy climax.

"Well, it seems to be just another case of Old Tray," said Mr. Ponderson, when the narrative was completed.

"Maybe it is," said Obie, having not the slightest idea of the lawyer's meaning, "but Ah sho' feels more like a deuce dan a tray."

"Oh, there's no occasion to worry," consoled the attorney. "We will obtain a writ of *habeas corpus* and have you out in a jiffy."

"Boss, dat nigger ain't dead, is he?" inquired the startled Obie.

"No, he was only stunned. What put that notion in your head?"

"Thought Ah heard you say sumpin' 'bout a corpse."

"The one I referred to isn't dead by a long shot, and it will be a sad day for us lawyers, as well as for you jail-birds when it passes out," the attorney answered enigmatically.

Shortly before ten o'clock on the following morning a deputy sheriff visited Obie's cell and escorted him to the courthouse, where he appeared before Judge Habernathy. Running anxious and inquiring eyes over the courtroom as he entered the door, Obie discovered Lawyer Ponderson standing by the judge's bench, while seated just within the rail was his former employer, Stout.

Conversing with Mr. Ponderson was a tall, broad-shouldered, keen-eyed individual whose wide-soled shoes and bulging hip pocket betrayed the plain-clothes man. A moment later Judge Habernathy entered, took his seat upon the bench, and the hearing began.

The first witness called was the detective, who proved to be from Macon, Georgia, and who had come to Birmingham armed with requisition papers for one Doc West, alias Brown, alias King, alias Stout, who was wanted on a charge of fleecing an army of negroes out of numerous sums of money, while posing as national organizer for the Knights of Friendship, Brotherhood and Mutual Burial. The detective had never heard of Obadiah Shorter and knew of no accomplice of West. "So far as my information goes, West was a lone worker," the detective concluded.

"That will do," said Mr. Ponderson, who was conducting the examination. "But I would thank Detective Scott to remain in the courtroom, as I may wish to ask him a question later on."

The negro, West, alias Stout, was next introduced, and said that he had not known Obie until he hired him in Mobile to run his car.

The arresting officer was then called and stated frankly that he had caused the petitioner, Obadiah Shorter, to be incarcerated because he suspected him of being implicated in some of the transactions of which West was accused, but he had no evidence of this.

"That's all," said Mr. Ponderson, addressing the Court. "I now move that my client be discharged."

"Has the State's solicitor anything to say?" asked the judge.

"He has not," that official replied, and the judge announced: "The prisoner is discharged."

"Now," said Lawyer Ponderson, who never failed to get all the facts in a case, "I would like to ask Detective Scott if he did not come to Birmingham prepared to pay a reward of five hundred dollars for the apprehension of the prisoner West?"

"Yes, sir," replied that gentleman, "and I have the money here in the form of a certified check."

Turning to the judge, Mr. Ponderson continued:

"While it is not a matter of litigation, and I trust there will be no occasion for such action, I feel that it is proper at this juncture to suggest that the five hundred dollars be paid to my client. It is an undisputed fact that he carried the prisoner to the jail and——"

"Ah sho' did!" exclaimed the startled Obie, whose eyes had suddenly grown to the size of golf balls.

"An' that ain' no lie," croaked the prisoner. "He took me dar when Ah wuz helpless an' in——"

The judge rapped for order and then, smiling broadly at the astonished Obie, said:

"The issue is not before this tribunal for adjudication, but, speaking *ex tempore*, I should say that Obie is entitled to the reward."

"Me, too," said Obie, speaking with great fervor.

"That's the way I see it," agreed the Georgia detective, adding, "Mr. Ponderson, if you will write a receipt for this sum, I will turn the check over to you."

As the little crowd filed out of the courtroom, the negro West, alias Stout, and so forth, turned to Obie.

"Boy, Ah guess you didn't mean no harm," he said, "but you sho' put me whar Ah ain' got no mo' use fur a automobile dan a alligator has fur a fount'in pen, so if you wants de pile uv junk whut's mostly re-sponsible fur me bein' whar Ah's at, you kin have it. An'," he added, "if you takes it out in de woods an' soaks it in karosene an' burns it, you won't be hurtin' mah feelin's a-tall."

"GOLLY, but de sun sho' is shinin' bright!" cried Obie. "Lemme pass you fifty dollars for dat car, no how. You's gwinter need money whar you's goin'."

"Boy, fifty dollars nor a hundred dollars don't make no diff'ence to me. Ah's got enough soaked away to fight dem nigger lodge j'iners 'til de las' cows come home an' has been milked, an' befo' Ah git through wid 'em dey's gwinter wanter compromise by 'lectin' me Gran' Ex-alted Keeper uv de Treasury Key. As Ad-miral Dewey tol' dem Germans at Santi-a-go, 'Ah's jes begun to fight'!" he ended, as he caught step with the deputy and marched back to his cell.

When the five-hundred-dollar check had been cashed Obie received one-half of this sum, the remainder being retained by his attorney, who remarked:

"Obie, if luck was size, you would be as big as the Colossus of Rhodes."

"Thank you, sah, but dat's a road Ah ain' never been on yet, and Ah ain' huntin' for it now. Whut Ah wants is de road for 'Tlanta, an' Ah's gwinter hit it soon."

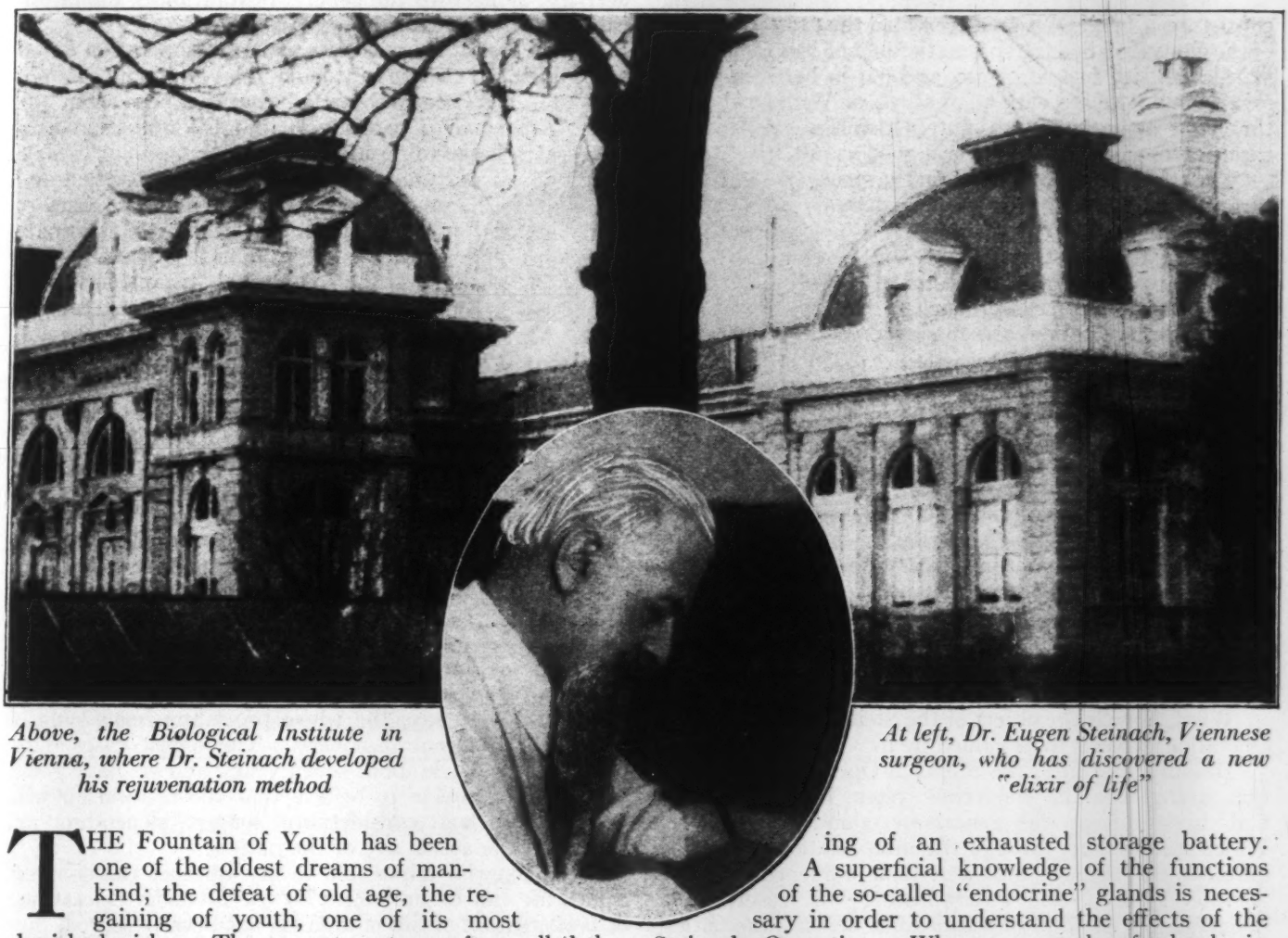
"Well, I'll be there in about eight hours," said the lawyer, "and I'll be ready to pull you out of whatever trouble you succeed in cooking up over there."

"Yas, sah. Thank you, sah. Ah sho' won't forgit to sen' for you," replied the darky, and added quickly: "Jes' one thing mo', Mistah Ponderson. When you gits to 'Tlanta, Ah wish you'd tell de folks Ah says to fetch out de purple robe an' de golden calf, 'case de prodigious son am comin' home."

"The New Fountain of Youth"

How the Famous Steinach Operation Checks the Progress of Old Age—A Record of Its Success to Date

By Harry Benjamin, M. D.



Above, the Biological Institute in Vienna, where Dr. Steinach developed his rejuvenation method

At left, Dr. Eugen Steinach, Viennese surgeon, who has discovered a new "elixir of life"

THE Fountain of Youth has been one of the oldest dreams of mankind; the defeat of old age, the regaining of youth, one of its most cherished wishes. The present century, often called the "biological century," has given us at least a partial fulfillment of that dream—not a complete restoration of youth, but a retardation of old age by the Steinach Operation, which will remain a scientific attainment of the highest order.

To be sure, from all that we know of life in general and the human body in particular, we cannot believe in the possibility of changing a white-haired man of seventy or eighty into a strapping young fellow of thirty. But, nevertheless, the "biological century" has brought forth a method to restore vital capacities after they have been weakened by age or overwork, and thus to prolong social and economic usefulness for a certain length of time. The study of the endocrines, or ductless glands, and especially Steinach's experiments culminating in the so-called "Steinach Method" have accomplished not only this restoration of *Usefulness*, but also a restoration of a certain amount of *Youthfulness* by re-energizing the aged organism. This is accomplished by stimulating and revivifying an important gland of the reproductive organs, a process comparable almost to the recharging of an exhausted storage battery.

A superficial knowledge of the functions of the so-called "endocrine" glands is necessary in order to understand the effects of the Steinach Operation. When we speak of glands in general, we mean organs secreting a certain fluid, which is discharged through an excretory canal or duct. Examples of such glands are the salivary glands, producing saliva, or the liver, producing bile. Besides these, there are glands that have no excretory duct and no external secretion. These are the ductless glands, having an internal secretion only. This secretion, containing the so-called "hormones"—described as chemical messengers—is emptied directly into the blood stream of the blood vessels surrounding and passing through the glands.

The most important of these endocrines are the following: the pituitary gland (also called hypophysis) at the base of the brain; the pineal gland, also situated in the brain; the thyroid gland in the front part of the neck, the parathyroids near by; the thymus in the upper region of the chest—of importance usually only during child-life; the pancreas in the abdomen; the adrenals on top of the kidneys; and the sex-glands or gonads, which are the testicles in men and the ovaries in women. Doctor Benjamin Harrow's book, "Glands in Health and Disease," contains very valuable information about

the glandular system, written in a rather popular vein.

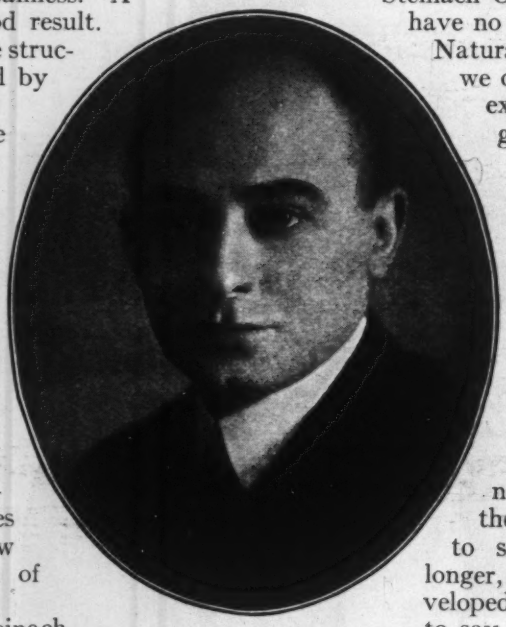
The hormones produced by these endocrine glands are of the most vital importance for the development of the human being—for his physical make-up and for the maintenance of his health.

In addition to these ductless glands with an internal secretion and those with an external secretion, there are some which have both functions—mixed glands. One of them, for instance, is the male gonad. Its internal secretion contains the "gonadal hormones"; its external secretion is the sperma.

The Steinach Operation, then, as applied to men, consists of a small incision after which the excretory canal of the gonad—called the spermatic duct or *Vas Deferens*—is isolated, tied in two places, and cut in between. The skin wound is closed with a few stitches. With local anesthesia the operation is absolutely painless. A careful technic is essential for a good result.

The effect of this operation on the structure of the gland itself is explained by Steinach in the following manner:

The external secretion of the gland, whose excretory canal is cut, is suspended. The cells producing the external secretion are made useless and are, therefore, relegated to inactivity. Consequently, they atrophy and gradually disappear. The interstitial cells which are the ones that form the gonadal hormones, now have room to expand, to multiply, and, consequently, to form a greater amount of internal secretion. The system is in this way again flooded with the gonadal hormone, the "elixir of life," and this gives all the other endocrine glands a new impetus, resulting in a restoration of general vitality.



Dr. Harry Benjamin, of N. Y., chief American exponent of the Steinach theory

What, now, is the object of the Steinach Operation; what is to be gained by it?

Broadly speaking, the Steinach Operation strengthens the endocrine system by first invigorating the generative gland. Which means that, through the inter-relationship of the different endocrine glands and their influence over the nervous system, this strengthening will result in a re-energizing of the physical and mental capacities. These capacities may be weak or inferior and may, therefore, require strengthening for three principal reasons:

I. The endocrine system of a person may be weak and inferior by inheritance. This inferiority may, then, exhibit itself in young people. In these cases the Steinach treatment may be administered to a relatively young man or woman.

II. A weakness of the glandular system may have been caused by overwork. Here we have one of the most frequent reasons for the performance of the Steinach Operation, in which Americans will probably be most interested, because America is the country of intense workers.

III. In the third group of cases to be benefited by the Steinach Method are those in whom the endocrine system has been weakened through actual old age. In such cases, if sufficiently responsive, real rejuvenation may occur.

In his very technical book on "Rejuvenation" Steinach says, "After my experiments with animals I have asked myself the question whether the process of aging is a condition against which we are as helpless as we are against an incurable disease, or whether senility could at least be influenced within modest limits. My experiences have decided this question in the affirmative." Indeed, Steinach's opinion—that senility can be checked—has since then, 1920, been proved to be correct over and over again.

The outstanding feature of the Steinach Operation is this, that no foreign gland substance, from monkeys, goats, or humans, is introduced into the body of the patient, but that the functions of the patient's own glands are stimulated and re-energized into a more youthful activity, along with the general restoration of his physical and mental qualities.

There are, of course, cases where the operation is not advisable and where an endocrine stimulant is not desired. But the worst that can happen after the Steinach Operation is that the operation may have no positive results.

Naturally failures have been observed and we do not know as yet in what cases to expect them and where to anticipate good results. This is where the physician's personal experience with the Steinach Operation counts. Also, a faulty technique of the operation might be responsible for certain failures. Nevertheless, a great majority of the cases have been benefited—the benefit manifesting itself in mind and body.

There remain only a few questions to be answered in connection with the operation on man.

The improvement usually does not manifest itself immediately after the operation; but in from four weeks to six months, and sometimes even longer, the beneficial effects are fully developed. How long they persist it is hard to say, the whole procedure being only a recent discovery. The oldest cases date back about seven years, and we have good reason to believe that the restoration will last considerably longer, depending of course on the actual age of the patient.

It is likewise impossible to say whether the span of man's life can be prolonged by the Steinach Operation. A prolongation of life in animals has been observed, but to draw definite conclusions from these animal experiments and apply them to human beings is neither wise nor scientific. A much longer and more extensive study of the whole question must first be made.

That rejuvenation is no delusion is conclusively proven through the numerous cases in which patients were subjected to vasoligature without their knowledge.

In his book Steinach writes regarding such cases: "I ought to mention here that the ligation was occasionally performed together with some other surgical treatment in this region and, intentionally, without the knowledge of the patients who are even to this day ignorant of the reason for the miraculous change (in their health) and their improved condition. Accordingly, any influence by suggestion was excluded right from the beginning."

Warning must be sounded here not to entertain exaggerated hopes. The Steinach Operation is a restorer of vital capacities, an "endocrine tonic" destined to postpone senility and afford relief from its concomitant troublesome complaints, no more and no less. If necessary, the operation could be repeated several times, with prospects of further retardation of senility, which,

according to the unalterable laws of nature, will finally set in, unless an intercurrent disease will terminate life before.

Regarding the class of patients who have so far undergone the treatment, I have made the interesting observation that nearly 13 per cent of my male patients were physicians, showing at least that the medical profession sees the logic underlying the method. Among my cases there have been so far, besides the above, three dentists, eleven professional men, twenty-seven business men, eleven laborers and mechanics, one municipal officer, and one artisan.

The New X-Ray Treatment

THE rejuvenation of women meets with somewhat greater difficulties than those of men, on account of the anatomical differences of the sexes. Instead of using the knife, the penetrating power of the X-ray is used to influence the aging female generative gland and stimulate it to greater activity.

Quite remarkable results have been achieved by this method, although our experience in this line is not as yet as complete as that with men. The treatment consists in a series of X-ray exposures, which, in the hands of an experienced specialist, are entirely without danger.

Regarding the beneficial results observed in women treated by this method, Steinach himself wrote:

"Lassitude and weariness disappeared and physical and mental faculties of younger years were restored. A decidedly changed and more youthful appearance was observed. The facial expression became more vivid, the general behavior more lively. The renewed firmness of the skin smoothed out wrinkles. Furthermore, a pronounced sensation of well-being and an increased joy of living were frequently reported by the patients."

Nevertheless, it must be repeated and emphasized that, due to the intricate nature of the structure and functions of the female reproductive organs, the treatment of women offers a more complicated problem and is somewhat more uncertain as to results. But even under the present limitations, there are many women who have not been disappointed in their hopes and who have been amply rewarded for undergoing the more onerous and extended X-ray treatment.

However, only a very experienced X-ray specialist, co-operating with a physician who is thoroughly familiar, not only with the Steinach Method, but also with the individual case of the patient under treatment, should undertake the task. Inexperienced handling of the treatment may bring harmful results. Otherwise, the procedure is entirely devoid of any danger whatsoever. As a rule, a course of treatment can be terminated within from three to six weeks.

The benefits of the Steinach Operation for the individual have already assumed the stage of reality. Through a general adoption of the method, however, social and economic consequences would develop, the nature of which are, of course, still in the realm of theory. It would go far beyond the scope of this article to enlarge upon these theories. Still, that far-reaching social and economic changes are bound to follow in the wake of a general practice of the Steinach Operation, can hardly be doubted. The old-age pension laws would be affected, as would certain phases of the insurance business, through the prolongation of the active period of human life.

No great imagination is required to conceive the gain to humanity from a prolongation of the productive years of great men, such as scientists, inventors, artists, etc.

Steinach's genius has presented humanity with a great gift. Utilizing it in the sense of the motto with which Doctor Paul Kammerer ended the first German edition of his book on "Rejuvenation" would make this gift a real blessing. Doctor Kammerer's motto reads:

"The possibility of rejuvenation will only then become a blessed achievement if we administer its blessings upon men who, for their part, are aiming to guide humanity onward and upward in its steep climb toward higher development."

Some Recent Books on the Fascinating Subject of Glands

EDITORIAL NOTE: Recent studies of the ductless glands and of their influence on human health and personality have opened up fascinating avenues of scientific research and popular speculation. Indeed, there is no other subject of current biological investigation that has aroused more intense public interest.

The foregoing article by Dr. Harry Benjamin summarizes briefly the nature and promise of the Steinach operation, which involves one of the most interesting applications of the scientist's new knowledge concerning the ductless glands and their secretions.

Readers who would like further information on this and other phases of the subject are referred to the following books which have especial interest for the layman:

Dr. Benjamin Harrow — **"Glands in Health and Disease"**
Dr. Arnold Lorand — **"Life Shortening Habits and Rejuvenation"**
Dr. Louis Berman — **"The Glands Regulating Personality"**
Dr. Paul Kammerer — **"Prolongation of Human Efficiency" (Steinach's Rejuvenation Method)**
Geo. F. Corners — **"Rejuvenation, How Steinach Makes People Young"**

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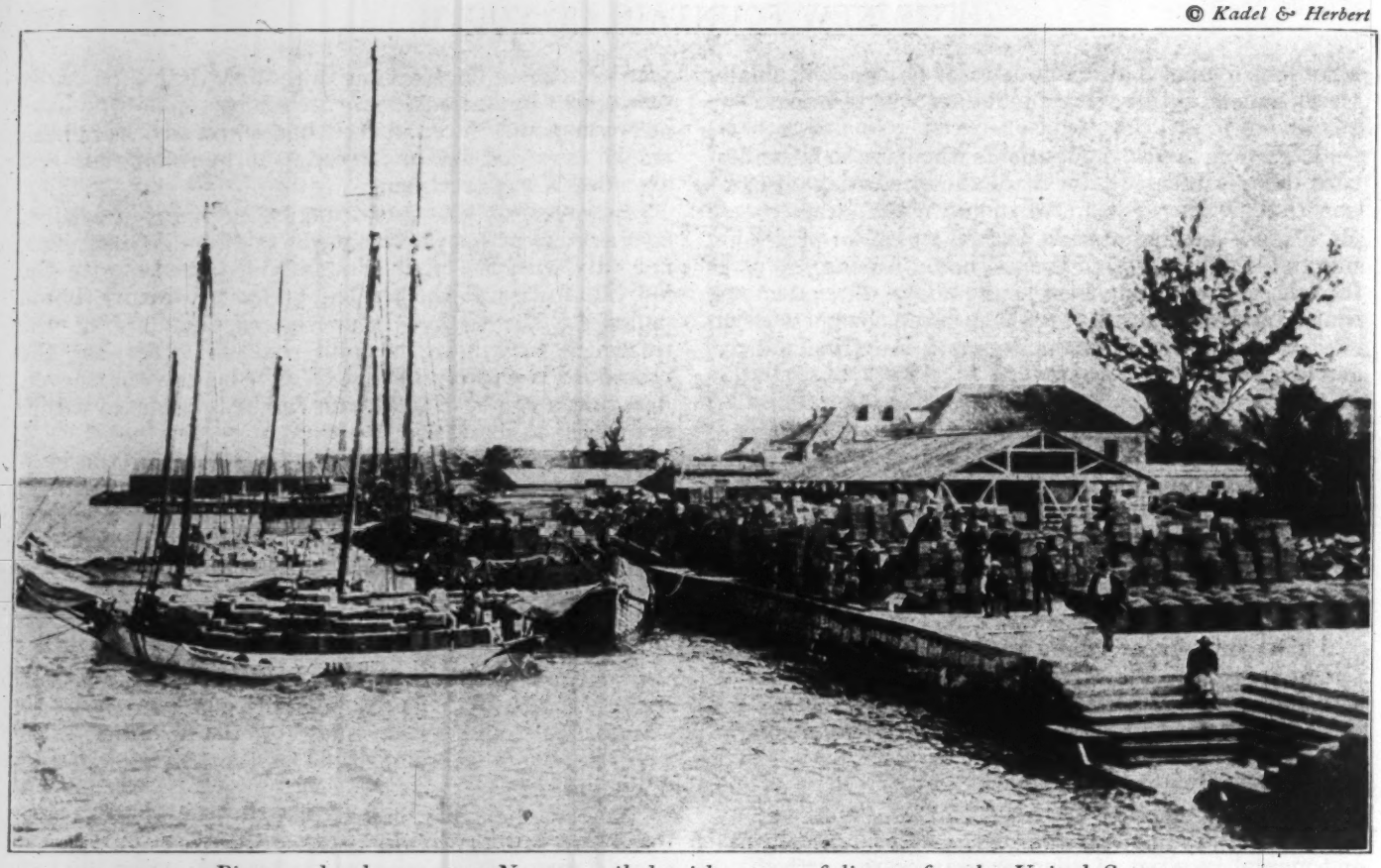

Piers and schooners at Nassau, piled with cases of liquor for the United States

My Year as a Whisky Smuggler

This anonymous personal experience article, describing exciting adventures in the daily life of a deep-sea rum runner, comes to McCLURE'S Magazine thoroughly vouched for as a bona fide account of actual experiences in the author's life

IN setting down a few experiences and observations covering a year of smuggling liquor from the Bahama Islands into the United States, I wish to establish clearly at the outset that I am actuated by no high-sounding motives for so expressing myself. I have no moral to point, no lesson to preach and no axe to grind. I propose merely to be truthful. Whisky running appealed to my imagination before I went into it; and it held my interest in a vise-like grip after I had got into it. It struck me, of course, as an opportunity to clean up quick, easy profits. And I will tell my story with no other explanation or apology than that.

The story of my whisky-smuggling adventure begins with a bootlegger whom we will call Shorty Smith. We lived in a winter resort on the east coast of Florida. I will call the town Majolica, for I believe that no town of that name exists in the State.

I had watched Shorty Smith rise from the lowly estate of one-bottle peddling to the eminence of buying and selling entire rumboat cargoes. He was making $20,000 a year, but he was always in debt.

He came to me one day and asked for a thousand-dollar loan. It seemed that the service he was getting from the smugglers was very unsatisfactory, and he wanted to own his own boat. He was paying ten dollars a case freight for getting the stuff in from the islands, and if he did his own "importing" and smuggled for other bootleggers at the usual freight-rate, he could double his income. He had found a fine boat that could be picked up for $2,000 cash, and he had half the amount in his pocket. Would I lend him the other half? I suggested that, instead of lending him $1,000, we form a partnership. This plan, Shorty admitted, had been in the back of his mind, but he thought I was too respectable and might be offended if he broached it.

I gave Shorty $1,000 and became an active partner in the enterprise. No papers were signed. Paper is not worth much in the whisky business.

We bought the boat that afternoon. She would easily carry, we estimated, 200 cases or more in any kind of weather. As she was, in many respects, typical of the boats comprising the Florida rum fleet, a brief description may not be amiss. Let us call her the *Seagull*. The *Seagull* was forty-three feet over all; nine feet beam; enclosed two-thirds of the way aft with a hunting cabin. She was driven by a thirty horsepower, four-cylinder heavy duty motor and equipped with a self-bailing cockpit.

I agreed to go along on the first trip; and we hired a crew of two men, a skipper and a motor man. Our skipper was a Bahama negro with a reputation for honesty and dependability. Because of his smooth mahogany complexion he was known everywhere as "Red." Red boasted that he had made more than two hundred trips

for liquor without once being overhauled. He had had many hair-raising experiences with storms and revenue men, and was supposed to have shot and killed one "prohi." I can't vouch for that, although I can attest that he was "hard-boiled."

Our motor man we will call Hank. He came to us directly from the prohibition forces. Many prohibition men have done likewise—seduced by the fortunes they see being made under their very noses. Hank had been a doughboy in France; and he was a good mechanic. He had a deep grievance against the world that he was supposed to have helped make safe for democracy; and he was a young man of iron courage, as you will presently discover.

Our First Trip to the Bahamas

WE started out with $5,000, in bills of large denominations; quantities of good food, drinking water, tobacco and gasoline. Our destination was Settlement Point, which is situated at the western extremity of the Grand Bahama Island.

We nipped into port ahead of a gale, after an uneventful trip across, and found the liquor stock of the half-dozen warehouses exhausted. Heavy weather had prevented the transfer schooners from bringing the expected large consignments from the big Nassau warehouses; and we were compelled to accept what was on hand—a mixed lot of unknown whisky and gin.

We cleared the same afternoon and set a course that would bring us off the Majolica light sometime after dark the next day. Six hours out of Settlement Point we ran into one of the worst storms of the season—a full northeaster. By nightfall we were lost—and three badly worried men. The question was, could the *Seagull* stand up under such punishment? Red was skeptical. He didn't like the way she submarined.

We took turns at steering and watching the engine and trying to catch a wink of sleep. That was a dreadful night. It was black—"blacker than the inside of a cow." Being in that little boat was like being tossed about in space by some unseen gigantic hand.

The tarpaulin awning over the cockpit was torn off and blown away some time during the night. No one noticed it go. An empty 50-gallon gasoline barrel vanished in the same way. We were literally beaten numb. There was no position we could maintain. If we stood up, we were knocked down; if we sat down, we were pitched over on our faces or backs, our hands torn from gunwales or tarp stanchions. That was the situation in the cockpit. In the cabin it was even worse. There was nothing to hang on to except the engine, and the engine seemed to bounce about like a bean in a bottle.

When the dirty gray of morning finally came, we were three wretched, wet, sore, weary smugglers. All night long we had been looking forward to daylight, when we could see this monster that was buffeting us; but the day was worse than the night. We had been denied the fear-inspiring spectacle of mountainous waves by the darkness. Now we saw them all too distinctly—toppling blue-gray immensities, each one threatening to wipe us off the face of the sea.

We exchanged three sentences all that morning. This occurred when a lurch of the boat sent Hank the motor man shooting out head-first from the cabin hatchway with a package of soda crackers in each hand. He crawled over to us on hands and knees and handed Red and me each a package.

"She's a damn fine sea boat!" he shouted.

"Damn right!" the skipper and I agreed in one voice.

And it was strange how much heart that bit of profanity put into us.

We needed encouragement. We had no means of guessing where we were. Our only navigating instrument was a compass that was none too reliable.

Well, the wind did not diminish and the waves did not abate. Both had us at their mercy all that day. It was along about four in the afternoon, when the sky thickened up still more, that we seemed to catch our second wind. And there is, to my mind, nothing more uncanny than the various reservoirs of courage and endurance a man can tap under long-sustained trying conditions.

We needed, as a matter of fact, a great many reservoirs. The gale lasted all that night and most of the next day. We were under an almost inconceivable nervous tension.

On the second morning I cut my right thumb while trying to open a can of tomatoes. The jagged tin edge made a nasty ragged wound. I rinsed it out in sea water, dipping it over the side and letting the salt water sting it to numbness. Presently it began to swell and darken. That thumb was not the least of my worries. Red, out of his long experience with shipboard casualties, promptly diagnosed blood poison; and for a month afterward it was a question whether I would lose the thumb, my right arm, my life—or all three!

By morning of the second day we were three scarecrows. I would not have believed that men could change so completely. My companions were hardly recognizable, with their swollen lips, sunken eyes and haggard faces. Our faces were paralyzed by the sting of the spray, and our bodies were numb from the buffeting. By noon of that day we were in a desperate situation. We were utterly lost. Our gasoline was low. Our fresh water had given out. Our food supplies were almost exhausted. Our tobacco was gone.

We sighted land at two o'clock in the afternoon. The wind blew itself out as we pitched and rolled and staggered toward that hazy unknown streak of land. We went in as close as we dared—almost to the edge of the breakers, and looked. None of us recognized the land. It was flat, sandy and treeless. There was no vegetation except for a scattering of scrub palmetto. Hank and I looked to Red for the desired information; and he stared and stared, with his low, reddish-chocolate forehead wrinkled like an ape's. He gave it up. He didn't know where we were.

"We may be near Jacksonville, and we may be near Miami," he decided.

"Maybe it's Cuba," the motor man suggested.

"Hank" Swims Ashore

I SUGGESTED that we might be off one of the Florida keys. But Red shook his head. The Cuban coast was mountainous; and he knew all the Florida keys. Hank told him he was a hell of a skipper, not knowing his own coast; and if they had not been so exhausted they would have settled the point with their fists.

And while they were quarreling, the engine stopped. We had been expecting this for hours; and we were now confronted by the unpleasant prospect of losing cargo, ship and lives in the surf. We put down both anchors, and hoped that they would hold. There was less than two hundred feet between our anchorage and the first line of breakers, but the waves were already subsiding.

Red wanted to know what we were going to do for gas, and we were both surprised when Hank volunteered to swim ashore as soon as the waves went down a little more. I was too surprised to compliment him on his courage. Until then I had suspected Hank of yellowness.

He had whimpered and whined both nights, and he had cried out with terror whenever a particularly large wave piled down on us in the daytime.

Hank waited another hour. He rolled his "shore clothes" in a piece of oilskin. With this strapped to his head he swam ashore. He had argued that he would attract much less attention entering a strange town clad in respectable garments instead of the torn and tattered and grease-stained things he wore.

Red and I waited with uneasiness that accumulated from the instant our motor man pushed off for shore. By ten o'clock we were acutely anxious. If "prohis" were anywhere in the vicinity, we were in a trap. And presently the fear dawned that our motor man had left us in the lurch. His courage in swimming through the surf was offset, it seemed to me, by his constant whimpering during the gale.

Automobile Headlights "Spot" Our Boat

IT was almost midnight when we saw a pair of automobile headlights coming down the beach. When the car was abreast of us it turned so that the headlights shone out over the water and upon the *Seagull*. This was our worst moment of the evening. Using automobile headlights and spotlights along the Florida beaches for picking out rumboats anchored offshore is a common trick of the prohibition men. It appeared for a little while as if Hank had tipped us off to the prohis; and we discussed the advisability of jettisoning our cargo, so that we would be an innocent fishing craft if they came out in a boat. We decided to wait a while.

It took Hank nearly an hour to swim out to us with two five-gallon cans of gasoline. Perhaps it should be explained that well-sealed cans of gasoline are quite buoyant in water, the specific gravity of gasoline being much less than that of sea water. It is hardly necessary to explain, however, that the much-doubted Hank was true blue. He brought us the gasoline and wonderful news. We were anchored a mile away from the village of N——. And the landing place on the Majolica beach that we had agreed upon before leaving was less than an hour's run! Hank had brought us a bottle of drinking water tied by a cord to his neck, and a package of cigarettes; but these were soaked and useless.

We reached the prearranged landing place on Majolica beach at two in the morning, and here further disasters were added to our wretched Odyssey. After several unsuccessful attempts, my partner Shorty came out to our anchorage in a small, flat-bottomed rowboat with the unpleasant news that Majolica was full of prohis. They weren't the "usuals" and we had to unload in a hurry.

We commenced unloading immediately. The waves piled up by the gale were still rolling in, and while a man might swim the surf with comparative safety, it was difficult to beach a heavily loaded flat-bottomed rowboat. On the second trip to shore it capsized in deep water, dumped out its load of twenty cases—and wiped out the profits for the entire trip!

That was the last straw. I was furious with Shorty for not having made better beaching arrangements; and I would have sold out my interest in the rum-smuggling industry for thirty cents. I went ashore on the rowboat's third trip, went home and slept for twenty hours. When I awoke, a doctor and Shorty were sitting beside my bed. While the doctor treated my thumb, Shorty regaled me with some cheering news. He said that on the first ebb tide, after the unloading, fourteen of the twenty lost cases had been found along the beach, so that our maiden voyage showed a nominal profit.

"I will make the next trip," Shorty promised, when he had completed the story.

I heartily confirmed this suggestion. I swore I would never again go out in the *Seagull*. But I did. A man's memory of such hardships as we had encountered is short-lived; but the knowledge that he triumphed over an enemy a million times stronger than himself inspires him forever.

Storms were our worst enemies. We never knew when to expect them. I purchased an expensive barometer, hung it up in the garage and consulted it frequently when the *Seagull* was in passage. And not until then did I realize how diabolically misleading scientific instruments could be. I have seen a slowly rising barometer herald the worst gale of the season; and I have seen a rapidly falling glass precede a week of calm, golden weather. It was a condition that provided ample worry for the partner who happened to be ashore, spending his nights at some lonely spot along the beach and straining his eyes hour after hour watching for the flashes from a pocket flashlight which would indicate that the *Seagull* was in. To guide the *Seagull* to the designated spot, we placed a bright oil lantern in a niche in the sand bank which rose behind the beach.

Generally several negroes and bootleggers were in the watch-party, the negroes to beach the surf-boat, and the bootleggers to load the stuff in their cars and whisk it away the instant it reached the beach. A bootlegger, well-armed, would walk a quarter of a mile up the beach and another bootlegger would post himself at the same distance in the other direction. What would have happened had they been surprised by prohis during an unloading I cannot say. I believe we would have shot them. As a matter of fact, I am sure they were more afraid of us than were we of them. The Florida whisky smugglers are a desperate and a dangerous lot, and the prohis know it. This may explain why the prohis seemed to be active mainly during the daytime.

Our Encounter with "Prohis"

WE had only one contact with them, and they furnished us then with a most amusing experience. I had been in the game about four months at the time and was considerably tougher than when I had made that first terrible trip. We had discharged a load of whisky, gin and champagne, and had loafed along into the Majolica River. Shorty and I had decided that the *Seagull* needed scraping and repainting, and we were on our way to keep an appointment with a boatyard.

We were in the Majolica River—Red, Hank and I—peacefully lounging about the cockpit after our breakfast of beans, tomatoes and crackers, when a beautifully varnished mahogany speedboat came darting out from under the low-hanging boughs of a flowering magnolia tree.

There were four men in the boat, and when it pulled up alongside three of them scrambled into the *Seagull* with drawn pistols. The leader of the party was a fat elderly man with a pink face. He was a new broom at that time, and he was sweeping the rivers clean. He knew who we were and what our business was, for he spoke our names curtly, then proceeded to make a thorough search.

We watched him and his two assistants virtuously. Fortunately, there wasn't a bottle of evidence aboard. There were plenty of scraps of incriminating burlap lying about, but they wouldn't be accepted as evidence in any court in the world.

While Red, Hank and I, looking desperate enough with our week-old beards, endeavored to act the parts of

innocent and astonished fishermen, the two young men kept their brand-new Colts on us and the leader of the expedition finished his search.

They left us without a word, so indignant for not being permitted to trap us red-handed that they neglected to say good-by or to explain what it was all about. The contrast between their dashing arrival and their embarrassed departure was so great that we burst into roars of laughter before they had gone a dozen feet. It was the joke of the rum fleet for weeks.

We were constantly in fear of Federal attacks largely because the prohibition men represented the mysterious unknown. We were supersensitive; we attributed qualities of sagacity and courage to them that no man alive possesses. We never, for example, unloaded the *Seagull* at the same spot on the beach. No one except Shorty and me knew where the beaching would take place. We were overcautious, but it paid. We were being enriched to the extent of from $750 to $1,000 apiece every week; and we took the greatest care of our golden goose.

We reduced the adventure of whisky smuggling to the most businesslike basis possible. For example, our disastrous experience in beaching with the flat-bottomed rowboat was a lesson that we richly profited by. Thereafter we used a stanch motor-driven sea skiff with a high freeboard. It would have weathered almost any gale. We hired an old fisherman to run it, and put him on our monthly payroll.

Our fattest profits were in champagne. Rich winter visitors at the exclusive hotels bought all the champagne we could import. It cost $55 a case at the island and brought from $125 to $150 delivered. We bought a light enclosed truck and hired a man by the month to run it. His job was to deliver and collect. Shorty and I withdrew entirely from retail bootlegging operations. Our man attended to that.

It was impossible, of course, to prevent people from knowing what we were doing. It was a sad blow to me when friends passing on the street greeted me coolly or ignored me entirely; but I was making a fortune and I managed to live through that period.

Our obvious prosperity was, to be sure, the despair and the envy of many. Aside from the storms and the slight risk of detection, it looked so easy! Two young men once decided to emulate our example, and their story is both tragic and amusing. They were Northerners fresh from a well-known university, and they were spending the winter at one of the fashionable Majolica hotels. They had plenty of money. Time weighed heavily on their hands. They purchased from us large quantities of whisky, gin, champagne,wine and liqueurs,which they and a few friends partook of with liberality every night. Their interest in rum-smuggling presently became acute. And one day they informed us that they had decided to buy a boat and go into the business.

The Audacious Plan of Two Young Men

WE had little sympathy with the idea. We were having trouble along about then with competition from a smuggler who was encroaching on our territory and cutting prices in a most annoying way. We told the young adventurers that they would have difficulty in disposing of their cargo. But they refused to be discouraged. They pointed out that we were selling every drop we could import, and that the demand wasn't half satisfied. They knew where they could pick up an ex-sub-chaser for a song. It was a 110-footer, and they could easily carry $18,000 worth of whisky at a load, which they could sell as easily for at least $25,000. They could do this once a week, and their profits would accordingly exceed $6,000 a week. They generously allowed $1,000 a trip for operating expenses.

We told them that if they dumped all that liquor on the Majolica market it would ruin the business, and we urged them to carry on their smuggling activities elsewhere. But the young men were adamant.

Their plan was audacious. No one knew they were buying a boat. No one would suspect two clean-cut young college men of being liquor smugglers! They would come up the Majolica River with their load in broad daylight, anchor in the stream and at night pull up alongside the hotel pier and transfer the stuff to automobiles. Several of their wealthy, adventure-loving friends who were helping them finance the venture would attend to the unloading details.

So they bought the sub-chaser, put a crew of two fishermen aboard and went to Settlement Point. They returned with 700 cases of whisky and gin. But on the return trip, their courage evaporated. The nearer they approached the Majolica beach the cooler became their ardor. They decided not to enter the river, but to anchor offshore. This they did. They anchored safely outside the three-mile limit! And there they were.

I Negotiate with the Would-be Smugglers

I SENT our beaching skiff out with my right-hand man to make inquiries; and he returned grinning from ear to ear with the information that the young men were in a state of palsy. They quarreled hotly before him; and they intimated that Shorty and I could have their cargo at the usual rate—F. O. B. beach!

I immediately passed the word around among my bootlegger acquaintances that the sub-chaser was to be boycotted. This request would have been a ridiculous one to ask of any bootlegger if there had happened to be a shortage; but just then there wasn't a shortage. A Georgia boat had come into the river with engine trouble and 500 assorted cases a few days before; the *Seagull* had only finished unloading the night previous.

I sent this information out to the sub-chaser, and permitted it to sink in. Thereafter I employed very unfair tactics. I sent my man out in a great hurry one evening with news that word of their presence had been noised about, and that Majolica was simply swarming with prohis. That same night a gale blew up. It wasn't much of a gale, but it frightened them still more. They were willing to retire from the whisky-smuggling industry at a loss. I immediately went out to negotiate. How much of a loss, I wanted to know, were they willing to suffer? I dickered with them for two hours, and finally took the lot off their hands at an average price of $5 a case less than they had paid at the island.

I beached the liquor that night, loaded it into two trucks and cached it. The experience had cost the young men approximately $4,000—and they considered that they were getting off cheaply.

There is a sequel to that story. The biter was severely bitten. I cached the 675 cases in graves dug for that purpose in the sand above the beach, about ten miles from the unloading point. Before I could distribute it around in safer places, more than a fourth of it was stolen. We were stung even worse than the amateurs!

But Shorty and I could well afford that loss. Our profits were over $2,000 a week by that time; we were exhausting every money-making possibility. Our scheme for turning the dull summer season into a profitable one was a case in point. During the summer the tourists are gone and all Florida business is slack. Most smugglers lay up their boats or make trips only at long intervals.

We did neither. We worked up a highly lucrative trade with out-of-town bootleggers. As a result, business was as brisk in summer as it had been all winter.

We were each making and spending a small fortune monthly. But it could not go on forever. The strain was telling. During that year I lost seventeen pounds, a great deal of hair and approximately nine hundred hours of sleep. Two incidents, which took place at the beginning of the winter season, finished me.

That season opened inauspiciously for the smugglers. There was very little liquor on hand to begin the season with; and when the rush was well on, a northeast gale set in and blew on and off for nearly five weeks. No boats dared put out until the weather settled. The tourists were clamoring for their liquor; and after that storm cleared up I don't believe there was a case of foreign liquor in the entire State!

My Last Trip as a Whisky Smuggler

WHEN the weather did clear, there was a rush to Settlement Point from every port along the Florida coast. There hadn't been a boat in for weeks; and in one morning, the morning Red, Hank and I arrived in the *Seagull*, fifty-seven boats came in! We were fortunate in being among the first to put our orders in. By evening prices were out of sight. Cases, sacks and kegs of liquor were stacked all along the water front, each pile guarded by men bristling with firearms. The harbor was in a tumult: boats entering; boats loading; boats clearing; boats colliding.

That afternoon I unknowingly witnessed the first act of a tragedy. A big seaplane from Palm Beach owned by two daring young men came over for a load. They had been running liquor with the plane all summer and they had orders enough now to fill fifty planes. Ordinarily they carried twenty-five cases. This day they overloaded, and started off with more than forty. They had great difficulty taking off. They left the water twice, only to settle down sluggishly again. But finally they got away, and in a moment were climbing.

That was the last ever seen of them. They never reached Florida. No fragment of the plane was ever found. Probably they encountered a drift or a pocket, and nosedived straight to the bottom of the Gulf Stream.

The *Seagull*, loaded to the gunwales, started out shortly afterward. We encountered a sloppy, rolling sea with what the sailors call "a lot of vice" in it. When we were ten miles out, the water pump broke.

A heavy sea was whipping up, and the sky was ominous. We wallowed in the trough all night. Morning dawned gray and threatening. Storm clouds were piling up. It was, I believed, that long northeaster coming to life again. But it passed over or circled around us. Shortly before noon, a Jacksonville boat bound for Settlement Point sighted us and gave us a tow.

Several seaplanes were there in port making inquiries after the lost plane. The settlement was in a hubbub about it. I prevailed upon one of the aviators to start for Palm Beach and take the broken pump parts to a friend of ours. He delivered these to the friend two hours later, and the friend caught a train for Majolica. Shorty spent that night in a machine shop, fashioning the new parts. They came the next day, via train and seaplane. Once again we started out.

It was destined to be my last trip as a whisky smuggler. The experience with the broken pump had exhausted my nervous system, and I was afraid that that prankish northeaster was planning another hard blow.

We left white water and entered the sapphire-blue fringe of the Gulf Stream about two in the afternoon. A haze lay over the sea toward the northeast, and a wind from that direction was freshening. There was every evidence of a heavy gale impending. I looked at the burlap sacks in the boat, and I suddenly hated them. That may account for my subsequent insane behavior.

"I can't stand a three-day gale now," I told Red, and Red said philosophically that I might as well get used to the idea, for we were in for a hell-buster. It might not be a long blow, but it would be interesting while it lasted.

We repacked the cargo, and were ready for it when it struck. I shall never forget the sound of the first blast of that squall as long as I live. That's all it was—a squall; but how were we to know?

That first warm puff seemed to set every nerve to tingling. A wave broke and spilled a few gallons into the cockpit. It was a self-bailing cockpit, but I forgot all about that. I grabbed the hand pump and started pumping. It suddenly seemed to me that the *Seagull* was sitting much too low in the water.

Then the storm struck. Next moment I was sure we were sitting too low in the water. We were off the course for a moment—long enough for a wave to break over our after rail. Some of it went sloshing down into the cabin.

Then I lost my wits. I thought we were sinking. I had visions of the 600-pound sharks which abound in the Gulf Stream—tigers that would make one mouthful of the largest whisky smuggler alive!

"Throw it overboard!" I shouted at Red and Hank. "Every damn case of it!"

They caught my panic and acted instantly on that foolish suggestion. The next few minutes were busy ones, as case after case of liquor went overboard.

We had jettisoned two-thirds of our cargo when Red called my attention to a curious phenomenon over our starboard bow. Through a patch of pale-gray clouds, I saw a golden bar of sunlight falling on brilliant blue water. There was blue sky ahead—nothing but blue sky!

And we had tossed into the ocean, as a check-up showed, about $5,000 worth of liquor!

It was, as I said, my last trip. I had lost my nerve. After that squall left us, we enjoyed a calm, uneventful passage. I went ashore trembling like a man with malaria. That was more than a year ago. I have never put foot aboard a motor boat since, and I don't intend to! My ex-partner is positive that that whisky never went overboard; that I double-crossed him, and I honestly cannot resent that imputation upon my honor. In the smuggling business, nobody's word is any good.

So I retired because my health was broken. I wish I could say that I retired and lived upon the income from my investments. Strange to say, there were no investments save a small piece of not particularly high-grade real estate with no buildings upon it, a very handsome automobile with a very low second-hand value, and a few hundred dollars in the bank. It is very strange how easily that kind of money can be spent.

I said at the outset that I had no lesson to preach and no moral to point. I have presented facts throughout, and I feel that it is incumbent upon me to present one or two more. But don't accuse me of being a moralist. I am referring to what every smuggler knows: Once Mr. Coolidge, or whoever may be in power, decides to clamp the lid on, ninety-five per cent of the smugglers are going to retire. All they will require is the authoritative announcement that destroyers and seaplanes are to be employed. Smuggling along the entire coast can be nipped in less than a week.

Whisky smuggling is mighty interesting and highly lucrative, but if you will take the word of a retired smuggler, it is at present an exceptionally fine business to stay out of.

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Horatio Shard's Enemy

[Continued from page 93]

off the path into the shrubbery, worming his way with extreme caution to a position not far from the left end of the long, broad veranda. Here he ensconced himself behind a clump of lilac bushes.

There were lights behind the window shades in the lower part of the house. Two thin, subdued streaks of light ran across the veranda from narrow windows alongside the closed front door. There were no porch lanterns in use. The rear part of the house was in darkness.

Vicky had been crouching behind the bush but a short time when a noisy trolley car went rattling down the hill. A minute or two later the light in the hall went out; the two thin streaks vanished from the veranda. The watcher heard the opening of the door. A few seconds elapsed, then the door was closed and footsteps sounded indistinctly on the mat-covered porch.

A MAN appeared at the top of the steps, where he paused for a minute before descending to the path. Vicky, whose eyes were accustomed to the darkness, had no difficulty in identifying him from the description given by Mr. Shard. He was wearing a hat pulled well down over his eyes; he carried a stick which he began to twirl lightly, airily, in his fingers as he strode toward the gate.

"You won't find it so funny swinging a pickaxe when you get to hell," mused Vicky, scowling after the departing Lothario. The little gunman considered himself a model of morality, not to say propriety, as compared to the type of criminal he was now gazing upon.

He stole along behind the tall, shadowy figure. Shard's "friend" and neighbor left the grounds by the small gate. Vicky watched him until he was lost to sight in the murk beyond the upper boundary of the park.

Five times during the ensuing fortnight, Vicky the Rat paid surreptitious visits to the place. On only one of those occasions did he fail to see the disturber of Mr. Shard's peace of mind. The man always left the house and grounds in the same sly yet jaunty manner that had marked his departure on the night of Vicky's first visit—and within a minute or two of the same time. On his third trip to the Shard estate, Vicky selected the spot from which to fire the death-dealing shot: a clump of bushes some ten or twelve feet off the path and at a point not far from the wall.

By this time he was thoroughly familiar with the man's figure, his tread, his carriage, his apparel—even with the dim shape of his head and face. The "guy" sported a mustache, one of those longish affairs that Vicky scorned, being a dapper, clean-shaven rascal himself. He had an erect, almost defiant carriage; there was, to Vicky, something positively insulting in the slow, self-satisfied way in which he strolled down the path, something that caused the little gunman to grit his teeth and more than once to finger his revolver fondly. His hatred for the interloper increased as time went on. He developed an acutely malevolent desire to drill a hole through him; he longed for the time to come when he could put a sharp, sudden stop to the fellow's strolling.

Never before had he experienced an actual definite feeling of antipathy toward an intended victim. This feeling became so intense that one afternoon he went unheralded to Shard's office to protest against any further delay.

"I've got him dead to rights," he pleaded. "No chance for a mistake. Let me——"

Shard checked him with a gesture. The eager gunman caught a gleam of horror in his employer's eyes, noticed a sudden blanching of his thin gray face.

"There is no occasion for haste," said the gaunt lawyer. "I am glad you came to see me today. Your man has gone to Chicago. He may be absent for a week or ten days. I do not know when he is to return. There is no use in your going out to my place this week. Next week, or the week after—yes. Now don't come to me again about this matter. I cannot endure talking about it. I don't want to hear another word on the subject. I—I leave it all to you. Use your own judgment. Don't come to me again about it. Now go."

Vicky went grouchily away. He figured that he already had wasted a week's time, and here was the chicken-hearted Shard asking him to waste ten days more! Shard made him sick! What was the sense of putting it off? Why not have it over and done with? Yes, Shard made him sick! What kind of a blamed fool was he, anyhow, this guy Shard? In the first place, nobody but a bonehead would insist on the man being killed in his own front yard, and, in the second place, as long as it ought to be done, why didn't he do it himself? That's what Vicky couldn't understand.

No matter when it was done or who did it, Shard was sure to be accused of the killing if it took place on his own grounds. And, decided Vicky, this unwritten-law gag they pull so successfully down South wouldn't work in New York State. They don't pin roses on a guy that kills his wife's lover up here in the North. Not on your life! They strap him down in a chair and let ten thousand volts of daylight into him. Maybe the blamed boob thinks his money'll get him off. Maybe he's countin' on that, and public opinion, and married men on the jury, and—well, God knows money can do a lot. Maybe this guy knows what he's up against. He'd ought to know. He's a lawyer. He's a *celebrated* lawyer. He's got all kinds of dough. But he's a fool, just the same.

VICKY'S reflections ran along these lines for the better part of a week and then suddenly came up against a most astonishing notion. By cripes! Was it possible that Shard was framing his wife? A queer little chill swept over Vicky's meager but virile body. Framing the dame! Fixin' it so that she would be accused of killing her lover! By cripes! Holy mackerel! Just the sort of thing a slick, clever lawyer would do! Nobody else in the world could possibly figure on the thing turnin' out that way—nobody but a lawyer!

Vicky was nearly two hours recovering from the effect of this shock to his composure. He finally overcame it by doggedly arguing that Shard's wife did not deserve any sympathy and that it would be a whale of a good joke on her if she went to the chair innocent of murder, but guilty of something worse, according to Vicky's code of morals. Besides, it wasn't any affair of his. If Shard

wanted to send his wife to the chair, all well and good. That was Shard's business, not his.

And so it came to pass that Vicky the Rat motored out of town one night, driving a car that he had borrowed without the owner's knowledge or consent. In due time he arrived in the neighborhood of the Shard estate. This time he left the engine running and he scattered no tools on the ground before hopping over the wall into the gloomy park. Moreover, he parked the car in a little lane a hundred yards or so above the Shard property and off the trolley line. Swiftly he made his way among the shrubbery and trees to a certain clump of bushes. He possessed the eyes of a cat. He could see as well in the dark as in the light.

The rumble and clatter of the distant trolley car came to his ears. His body did not stiffen with the rigidity of suspense, it did not become taut with apprehension. On the contrary, it relaxed into a state of confident ease as he knelt down and waited. The car rattled past, charging down the hill. On time," mused Vicky. Just twenty minutes after the hour. Well, in a couple of minutes——

The light in the hall went out. The front door opened and after a few seconds closed again. Footsteps on the matted porch. Vicky's finger caressed the trigger. Down the steps came his man. Swinging his cane, hat well down over his eyes—sauntering slowly, cocksure and perhaps proudly.

HE was many feet away when Vicky's gun uttered its imperative command to halt. The tall figure crumpled up and sank slowly to the ground; a stifled grunt, familiar to the ears of Vicky the Rat, broke from his lips as he collapsed. A few spasmodic movements of arms and legs, scraping sounds on the gravel, and then the stillness of death.

The assassin went swiftly, silently away. He did not approach his victim to see if he was dead. He knew without looking that the bullet had found the heart. He could tell by the way the "guy" dropped.

The next morning Vicky was late in arising. He had slept soundly—in fact, he had overslept. Faring forth from his lodgings in the little side street far downtown, he made his way drowsily to the "joint" where he usually breakfasted. Stopping at a newsstand on the corner, he bought a newspaper—the paper he always bought because it had large, readable headlines of a sensational character. He did not expect to find anything in the morning papers about the murder, but there was always the baseball news and the racing results of the day before.

Sitting down at a table near the window, he yawned prodigiously in the face of the swarthy waiter who came to take his order.

"Cup o' coffee, ham an' eggs, griddles, another cup o' coffee, another portion of cakes and——"

He go no further. There is no telling where his forehanded appetite might have led him had not his gaze fallen upon a name in its careless, downward drift from the big, last-minute headline to a series of brief, double-leaded paragraphs. The headline itself, though black with sinister import, was of scant interest to the little assassin. "Well-known Man a Suicide" was not enough to startle Vicky out of his habitual calm. But the name "Shard" in the first paragraph—

[Continued on page 116]

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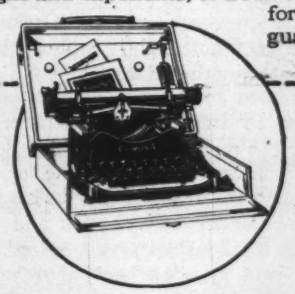

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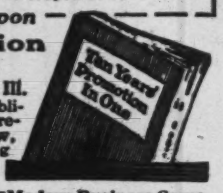

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Horatio Shard's Enemy

[Continued from page 115]

that was another thing. He read, and as he read his eyes grew wider:

"H. W. Shard, prominent and distinguished member of the Bar, shot and killed himself last night at his country place in Westchester County. His body was found on the grounds of the estate by servants who had heard the shot. The butler, Charles Landquist, telephoned to the police, who on their arrival pronounced it a case of suicide.

"There was nothing to indicate that the lawyer had been murdered.

"A revolver with one shell empty was found on the ground at his side. He had shot himself through the heart.

"According to stories of the servants, Mr. Shard had been acting in a peculiar manner for the past few weeks. He frequently left the house at or near midnight to stroll for hours in solitude about the grounds. On several occasions he was known to have worn a false mustache during his strange, nocturnal wanderings. This is accepted as evidence of a disordered mind.

"Some months ago Mr. Shard underwent a serious operation. The servants informed the police that he was aware of the fact that he had an incurable malady. He spoke of it frequently to them, saying that at best he had but a few months to live and that his suffering, though heroically borne, was at times unbearable.

"Doctor Adolphus Blewey, who performed the operation, was reached by telephone at an early hour this morning. He confirmed the report that Mr. Shard's malady was of an incurable nature.

"A note was found in one of the dead man's pockets. In a few lines he wrote that he had long contemplated suicide as the only means of escape from an even worse doom.

" 'I cannot wait so long for death to come,' was the concluding line.

"Horatio Wilberforce Shard had never married. He had lived for several years practically alone, except for the servants, on the historic old Shard estate in Westchester."

VICKY the Rat read it all over again.

"By gosh!" he muttered, as comprehension was forced into his puzzled brain. "Can you beat it! So that was his game, was it? Hired me to commit a suicide for him! Well, that's a new one on me. It sure is. This is the first time I've ever committed suicide. And say, somehow it ain't the same as murder. Just sort of doing a guy a favor, that's what it is. Funny, when you look at it that way."

He wrinkled his brow for a moment. Then his face cleared.

"Poor old guy. I kind of hope he forgot about that eight hundred," he mused as he tackled the ham and eggs.

Two Arabian Knights

[Continued from page 33]

lookout for us, I think your advice is correct—but, I tell you this, Pete, if they think they can bluff me out with this exhibition of knife-throwing, they have another guess coming. If anything was needed to determine me to bust up that marriage, this is it. As soon as we get some money and the *Scylla* leaves port, we're coming back."

"Sure we are," Pete grinned, "but I'm goin' to put on my cast-iron B. V. D.'s before we do."

Chapter VI

WE slept under the stars that night, nor, despite the fact that it grew quite chilly toward morning, have I ever slept better. A pile of sand, in the sheltered corner of a broken-down Roman wall, was our couch. Peter's blankets and rubber poncho served as covering and my musette bag did us excellently as a pillow.

The sun was just peeping over the rim of the sea when I rose and rubbed the sleepiness from my eyes and the stiffness from my limbs. Quite unconsciously, O'Gaffney rolled the blankets more tightly around him and settled into another doze. I left him there and climbed to the top of the wall, scaring almost to death a native who was passing along the road with a heavily laden ass. I don't know which he took me for, a ghost or a robber, but at sight of me he began to belabor the donkey with a stick and to squeal curses. Until he had passed a bend in the road, he kept glancing back apprehensively, as if he expected to see me come after him. When he had disappeared from sight, I settled down on the rough slabs of the ancient wall and watched the changing colors of the sea, far below. It was a blessed opportunity for musing and introspection.

Truly, I must have the soul of a tramp, for, sitting there on that wall, thousands of miles from home, with nothing in my pocket, criminally involved by our adventures and having only the vaguest plans for the future, I was filled with a great contentment.

It is only to try to arouse your sympathetic indulgence that I tell you my history. I was conceived, born and raised under the mummifying influence of peculation. Because my mother's brother was unmarried and the possessor of millions, I was given the careful upbringing of a pedigreed race horse destined, from birth, to run in the Grand National. I am quite certain that when my mother whispered the happy news of fruition to my father, she added a prayer that the child would be a boy and obedient. I am sure that she had the same joy that a queen would feel in assuring the perpetuation of a dynasty—only, in this case, the kingdom to be inherited was seven million hard dollars. Even then, my uncle, for whom I was named, had shown himself foreordained a bachelor, suspicious of all except his enemies.

My entire childhood was colored to his dyspeptic whims. Every insignificant detail of my upbringing was scrutinized and tested to meet his approval. My weekly visits to the gloomy mansion on Chestnut Street were both dreaded and anticipated as progressive tests that must be passed. If I returned home with a bright dime clutched in my gloved little fist, I was petted and adored; but if, on the contrary, the dyspepsia was worse than usual or I made a childish slip that earned a frown and a reprimand, an unbearable atmosphere of pessimistic disappointment descended upon our supper table.

The horrible accident—a runaway—that snuffed out the life of my father and brought the death of my mother in less than a week, became a glorious sacrifice to victory in her eyes when it brought the gaunt gray figure of my uncle to her bedside. His promise to adopt me, delivered in harsh tones of unaccustomed solicitude, made her forget her bodily anguish in mental joy at having accomplished her life work. I had scaled the heights. I was the heir apparent.

After that my life was a negative reflection. I had no friends, only a few acquaintances who were willing to endure my snobbish petulance and the hushed stagnation of that sanctified atmosphere in the hope of later enjoying the actual benefits that wealth can confer. I was made much of, in a timid sort of way, by dowager mothers and their débutante offspring. The only real person I encountered was Louise Lewis—a sort of second cousin—who persistently discouraged all my incipient attempts at love-making, nettled me with her caustic comments on my subservience to my uncle, brought into my breast the first dissatisfaction with my lot, and, since the break with my uncle, had encouraged me to propose to her. Until Germany threw the affairs of the world into flux, I was the most lonesome, sycophantic shadow that ever haunted a fortune. With the war came contact with normal individuals, a sudden awakening to my own uselessness and Pete.

Pete!

It is not strange that I should have hated him above all other men when we first met, for he was my top-sergeant. He seemed to take an unholy joy in giving me the most revolting jobs that offered. He broke down, mercilessly, my self-centered aloofness and my contempt for the opinion of others. He caustically reviled me for my squeamishness, when I turned sick after killing my first German with a bayonet, yet, shortly after, when I was gassed through my own negligence, he crawled a quarter of a mile under fire to drag me back to safety. Enough of that. He was the first real friend I ever had and the only one I wanted.

There remains to explain why we were at Kieff. Even after the break with my uncle, I still received a small but regular income from the estate of my father. It was enough to permit us to eat and sleep and travel. We had planned to visit the Holy Land—Pete, despite his faults, was a good Catholic—and bought our passage on the *Scylla* as far as Kieff. At Athens, just before we were to sail, came the devastating letter announcing the failure of the company in which my money was invested. Somehow I suspected my uncle behind that blow. Since the owners of the *Scylla* would not refund our passage money at that late date and since Kieff was a step closer to America, there seemed nothing else to do but go on.

I mused for perhaps a half hour on the things I have just recorded, on the beauty of a Syrian sunrise, on the extraordinary experiences of the past few days and, particularly, on the exquisite loveliness of Miss Anis Bin Adham. I wanted to go back to Kieff. Even the danger of a stolen interview with Anis appealed to me. I could see myself being brought into her presence, hidden in a box—the departure of the eunuchs—the startled dismay on her face as I stepped out. I was in the midst of these indulgent fancies when a sound directly behind me, not unlike

[Continued on page 118]

Marshaling the Telephone Forces

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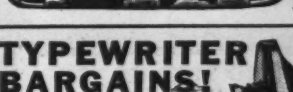

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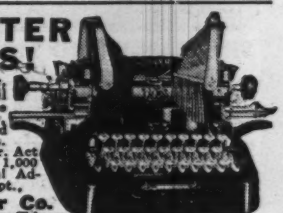

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Two Arabian Knights

[Continued from page 117]

the stentorian moanings of a dying bull, startled me out of my reverie. It was Peter yawning. He scratched his head thoughtfully, shoved his cap over one ear, cocked his eye at the sun and announced: "Wit' that they all set sail for Tonsilitus"—his usual announcement that he was ready to start the day.

After he had made his blanket roll and fastened it to his knapsack, he lit a cigarette and joined me on the wall.

"Judas, you miss an awful lot in life, Duke. There ain't anything as good as a cigarette before breakfast."

He let some smoke drift out his nose and mouth and spat at a lizard basking in the sun.

"I hope you appreciate that it took our last money to satisfy your craving for the filthy weed," I answered. "But I don't quite understand your meaning when you speak of smoking 'before breakfast.' That blessed word 'breakfast' seems to refer to some vague, indefinite, far-away thing, having no concern with us. You are certainly an optimist, Peter."

He flicked the ash from his cigarette and turned to me.

"You hungry, Duke?"

"Well—I never tasted baked lizard, but if I can catch one of the slippery little beggars, I shall certainly try it."

"We might go back to town," he mused.

"Do they serve breakfast in a Turkish jail?"

"Prob'ly not."

"Then we don't go back. I'd rather be hungry and free than just hungry. No, Peter, our best plan is to keep right on down this road until there is no chance of the police catching up with us."

Pete dropped from the wall.

"If we don't find breakfast, we're at least goin' toward Jerusalem."

"And away from danger," I added.

We made no attempt to walk fast, for we were bound nowhere and had plenty of time to get there. When the broad, dusty road curved down to the sea, we hunted a secluded cove, stripped to the buff and dived into the cool, salt water. Refreshed from the bath, but more hungry than ever, we donned our packs again and resumed our walk. As long as the Mediterranean was in sight a breeze moderated the heat of the sun, but when the road curved inland and hills cut off the fresh wind, our packs became extremely oppressive. Suddenly Pete stopped in his tracks and pointed to a promontory above us.

"Glory be—there's breakfast."

All I could see was a goat standing on a ledge of rock.

"How are you going to kill it?" I asked.

"Kill it, nothin'. I'm goin' to give you a nice cup of goat's milk to stop your foolish hollerin' for food. Me mother used to keep a flock of 'em when we lived in Coogan's Alley."

He took a tin cup from his knapsack and began climbing the rocks. I sat down in the shade to wait for him, but after awhile, when he didn't appear, I took a small volume of Marcus Aurelius from my musette bag—one of three books I had with me. I have found a perusal of his tenets comforting at all times, but never more so than at that moment, for, as I opened toward the center of the book, I found a very dirty, torn, five-franc bill. I recalled putting it there as a bookmark several weeks before, thinking to paste it together when I had time. I don't think heaven can contain a more joyous feeling than comes over you when you are entirely broke and find money. I tucked the bill away in my watch pocket and decided to say nothing about it to Pete, for its tattered state made it of doubtful value, but it was money—real money. I had just opened Marcus for a second time when Pete jumped back into the road, hot and disgusted.

"What now?"

"Wrong kind of a goat," he grunted, as he put the tin cup back in his knapsack.

With my new discovery, I couldn't be downhearted at his failure. Goat's milk was never my idea of a perfect breakfast.

ANOTHER half mile of dusty footwork and our eyes were gladdened by the sight of a low white building, nestled in the deep shade of olive and acacia trees, by the side of a small stream.

"When we come to that place I'm gonna mooch a cup of coffee."

"While mooching, mooch for two," I remarked. "Nothing would taste so good to me right now as a large, steaming cup of Java."

"How about your doin' it? You speak the lingo."

"Gladly—if I knew how to mooch, but I don't. All the practical, essential things are ignored at our institutions of learning. For instance, there was no course in moochery at Harvard——"

"Aw, quit your kiddin!" Pete answered. "You don't mind tanglin' wit' these birds in case they get nasty, do you?"

"How can they get nastier than they already are?"

"Well, they ain't gonna like our gettin' a square meal an' havin' no money to pay for it."

"You are developing a conscience, Pietro."

"Wha'd'yuh mean?"

"It never bothered you before—having no money to pay for things. However, with a square meal inside me, I could deal a lusty blow. Where you lead, I follow."

Which was arrant braggadocio, you will admit, since I was conscious all the time of that torn five-franc bill in my watch pocket. But it is always the newest recruit to a gang who talks the loudest. The successful outcome of our brazen tricks of yesterday had made me anxious to impress Peter with my devil-may-care spirit. Thus, I followed my dusty companion with a swaggering air of bravado beneath the cool arches of the wayside coffee-house.

It was a place of some ostentation. Although only a little past ten o'clock, there were a number of natives there, playing dominoes or a species of checkers, sipping coffee and munching sliced cucumbers and fresh lettuce leaves. Some of these wore gaily striped abayehs of silk, while others were dressed in the wide-skirted frock coats, of decided French cut, usually affected by the more cosmopolitan members of the Turkish gentry. Our entrance scarcely drew a glance, except from the proprietor. He had

entertained more than one crazy American tourist, making the journey on foot from Kieff to Jerusalem. They usually paid well. We were no sooner seated at a table in one corner than the swarthy little bandit hobbled nimbly over to us, his skinny shanks projecting like wooden pegs from his loose bloomers. The breeze from the sea swept in gratefully, between the low arches and puffed at the damp rush leaves on the floor.

Despite Pete's assertion, truth makes me admit that I don't speak Arabic. I understand a phrase or two and, occasionally, I can find a place to insert one of the few words of my small vocabulary. In this instance, Pete made known our wants. He rubbed his stomach, opened his mouth and poked his finger into the orifice. The proprietor nodded his head vigorously. I heard the word "coffee" and signified approval, I heard the word "bread" and indicated again that we were in perfect agreement. Other things he mentioned which I could not understand, but just to be on the safe side, we took those, too. When he had gone, Pete lit a cigarette and turned to me.

"Ain't it funny how easy it is to pick up a langwidge? Lookut just then! I didn't hardly say a word, but the old boy knew just what I wanted."

Two newcomers came in the door—evidently people of some importance, for every one in the room but Peter and myself rose and touched fingers to forehead and breast before seating themselves. The elder of the two, who walked before, answered the salutations to left and right with a perfunctory carelessness that smacked of routine. They took the table next to us. I have every reason to remember both men, so a brief description may not be out of place. The elder was a heavy, bloated man of sixty or thereabouts with a jaundiced skin, greasy and ock-marked. His button-like eyes were almost concealed by puffy lids. Three rolls of fat rode the back of his neck. A pig in human form, he grunted as he sank into his chair and let his mouth hang open, puffing for breath.

The younger man with him was dressed in the black-and-gold tunic and gaudy red breeches of the military. On his head he wore an astrakhan fez, ornamented with a small gold crescent in the center. He was about thirty and quite handsome, with flashing black eyes, a thin-lipped, cruel mouth under a narrow, waxed mustache and the most arrogant bearing I have ever seen. There was just enough resemblance in the features of the two to recognize them as father and son. There was something in the look the younger man cast at us—a look of sneering dislike—that made my blood suddenly riot through my veins. Pete returned the other's dislike with interest.

"Some dude!" he commented aloud.

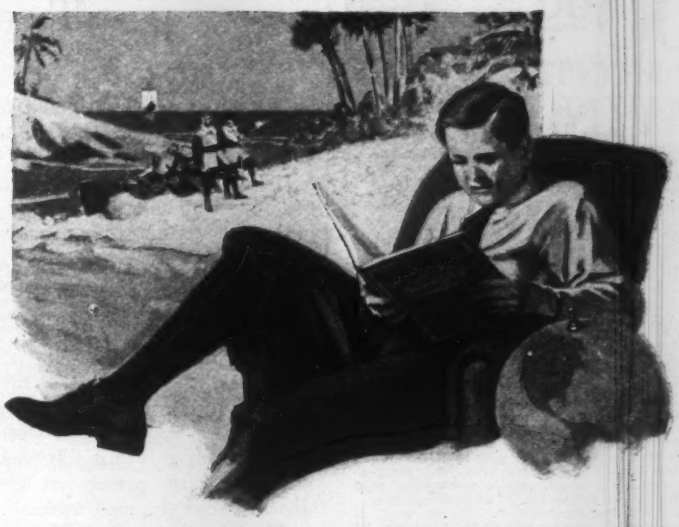
I saw the young Turk exchange a deadly stare with Peter, then he seated himself and started talking to the father.

"He heard you, Pete," I commented.

"Aw, these Spicks don't know nothin' but their own langwidge," O'Gaffney spat in reply. "Besides, I wisht he would hear. If they's a fight 'fore we get outa here, I get first choose. Ain't he pretty? I bet his name is 'Little Red Ridin' Breeches.' I hope he does start sompin'."

He got his wish, but not until after we had had food. With the coffee came eggs—oh, thrice blessed hens!—and flat, doughy Syrian

[Continued on page 120]



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Two Arabian Knights

[Continued from page 119]

bread, olives and honey and fresh figs. A meal fit for royalty or for the royal appetite with which we attacked it.

Have I mentioned that Peter has unfortunate table manners? Often, I have tried to hint that certain things are not done by gentlemen, even when alone—such as putting the feet on the table at the conclusion of a meal. His favorite attitude is to loll back on the back legs of his chair and maintain his precarious balance by bracing one foot against the edge of the board. Now, at best, it is an ungraceful, unpretty position, but in Turkey, to display prominently the sole of the foot to a stranger is an insult. It was the cause of our first brief passage at arms with the gentlemen at the next table.

The proprietor, in replenishing our coffee supply, was stopped by the military officer, who pointed in our direction and made some angry comments. The old man, most profuse in his apologies, rushed over to us at once and harangued Pete in excited Arabic, gesturing toward his offending members.

"What's he want?" Pete asked.

"He objects to your feet."

"What's wrong wit' me feet?"

"Better take them down. Our red-trousered friend objects to your table manners."

Pete obeyed, but with a slow surliness that was insulting in itself. He exchanged another challenging stare with the Turkish officer and muttered something I didn't catch.

"He's tryin' to pick a fight—that's what it is," Pete growled, turning to me, "an' I'll be much obliged to him for it if he makes one more crack like that."

"Forget about it! He's probably some one important around here and wants to show his authority."

"Is it any skin off his nose, I got me feet cocked up comfortable? He's tryin' to tangle wit' me, I tell you. Prob ly got his gang here. Oh, I've seen it did the same way at home when they was layin' to get somebody. Pick a fight—it's the first thing they do; then 'Bing—bing!'—an' when the smoke rolls away, the guy they're after is layin' on the floor, pickin' posies off the pearly gates." He looked over at the other table. "Just the same, if he hands me the raspberry like that again, I'm gonna give him a bunch of fives right in the beezer."

I am quite certain Peter had no intention of offending when he casually expectorated toward the next table. It was a natural action on his part. He was merely clearing his throat in the middle of a vivid description of a fight he once had in the Philippines over a girl he referred to as a "skinny drink of water." Had he been on his guard he would have seen with what fury the young Turk rose and strode over to our table. I saw it, but before I could get out of my chair, he raised his riding crop and slashed Peter viciously across the cheek. In one leap I was across the table and had swung with all my strength. The blow caught him full in the mouth and sent him spinning into the corner.

In an instant the place was in an uproar. I have only fragmentary recollections of what followed. I can see angry, shouting men advancing from all sides; Pete wiping the welt on his cheek and arming himself with a chair; the purple countenance of the fat man at the next table who was pointing at us and trying to scream something, but not making a sound; the prone body in black and red and gold, lying crumpled in the corner.

I didn't know then that the apoplectic fat man was Shuweifat Pasha, governor of the province of Kieff, nor that the man I had hit was the Honorable Shevket Bey, his son, the man Anis was going to marry, but I grimly understood from the expression on the faces of the advancing mob that Pete and I weren't fighting for our freedom. We were fighting for our very lives.

[To be continued]

The Moving Finger

[Continued from page 50]

a squadron of mounted police and Ferring, to whom moments were precious, leaned over the rail and tried to peer in at the adjacent window. The distance was too great, but he managed to tap against a pane.

Obtaining no response, he knocked again—and the casement swung open a few inches. A shadowy hand clutched the woodwork and a voice that thrilled him echoed softly above the pattering raindrops.

"Who is it?"

"Alan—Alan Ferring."

He caught the little gasping cry of delight as both windows flew wide.

"It is you! You have come to save me!"

"Pasqua!" For the second time in his life he beheld her and a sudden realization of her amazing beauty rendered him momentarily incapable of further utterance. He collected his senses with an effort. "Listen to me. They are all down there—drinking. There is a fellow guarding the entrance, but I don't anticipate much trouble with him. Don't stop to think. Just do as I tell you. Can you reach my wrists? Hold them tightly—like that. You are quite safe; you see I have both your arms. The sill is low. Put one knee on it; now the other."

She tried to obey, then slipped back into the room, shaking her head from side to side. Her dark eyes sought his.

"I can't. I am terribly afraid."

He smiled reassuringly. "Try again. I won't let you fall. Just close your eyes. It will be easier like that."

She jerked her head around suddenly and Ferring heard the sound of a key in a lock. A second later she had swung desperately into space. The iron rail gave appreciably as he drew her upward and, by dint of skillful maneuvering, brought her half fainting to the parapet beside him. He carried her in through one window as Spalanza's bearded face was thrust from the other.

"Alan!" she cried suddenly.

"Hello?"

"What are we going to do? He is in there." She pointed toward the dividing wall.

"We're going to make a bolt for it. Are you better now?"

She nodded.

"Good! If you should manage to get clear alone, don't bother about me, do you understand? Go straight to the Avvocato Scardovi, 8, Via Plana, and tell him I sent you."

He switched out the light, turned the key sharply and stepped into the corridor.

The door of the adjoining room was swinging open. He clutched at the handle with both hands, struggling against a force that was vastly superior to his own.

"Run," he called back softly.

The girl hesitated; then, throwing one despairing glance behind her, made quickly for the stairs.

Ferring steadied himself, released his grip and hit Spalanza as hard as he could. The giant staggered back into the room, the force of the impact causing his weapon to go off. At the same moment every light in the place went out, the storm that had rolled away into the distance thundered with renewed fury and something struck Ferring's pistol arm with a violence that sickened him. The automatic clattered to the floor. He sprang for the passage, a menacing black shadow at his heels, to find the staircase resounding with many footsteps, the sound of strident, excited voices everywhere. With the sudden realization of this added danger, his brain cleared. He flattened himself against the wall and contrived to trip his assailant neatly.

Two men passed him without noticing; a third, who carried a light, uttered a wild cry. The Englishman knocked the candle from his hand and sent him rolling down the stairs on others who were coming up. Profiting by the confusion, he endeavored to rush the position. Halfway down, he became entangled in a knot of struggling humanity. Some one caught him by an arm—and he wrenched himself free, hitting desperately in all directions. He recognized the sound of naked steel on stone, a gasping cry as a blow went home, the shouting of Spalanza above.

And then, just as a gust of cool air from the open doorway met him, a light flashed in his eyes and a missile, catching him squarely at the back of the head, sent him headlong.

He sat upright, clutching with both hands at his forehead, trying to realize what nature of miracle had saved his life. He was bruised and battered—as if a herd of frightened animals had passed over him in a wild stampede for safety. He stared vacantly at a single electric globe with a splintered shade and then his heart leaped within him as a familiar voice smote his ears.

"*Morta la gallina!*"

The little lawyer, who shaved only on Sundays, spread fat hands over his hips and beamed down at him.

"Scardovi! How did you get here?" He rubbed the back of his head. "And Pasqua? She came to you? You have seen her?"

The other was nodding like a tea-shop mandarin.

"Which question am I to answer first? The Signorina Patrini is safe. She found me prepared to follow you, with a few friends."

"And Spalanza——"

"Has escaped, as one might have expected. But, *amico mio*, I fancy we have bent the Moving Finger very badly tonight."

A woman suddenly appeared and dropped to her knees at Ferring's side.

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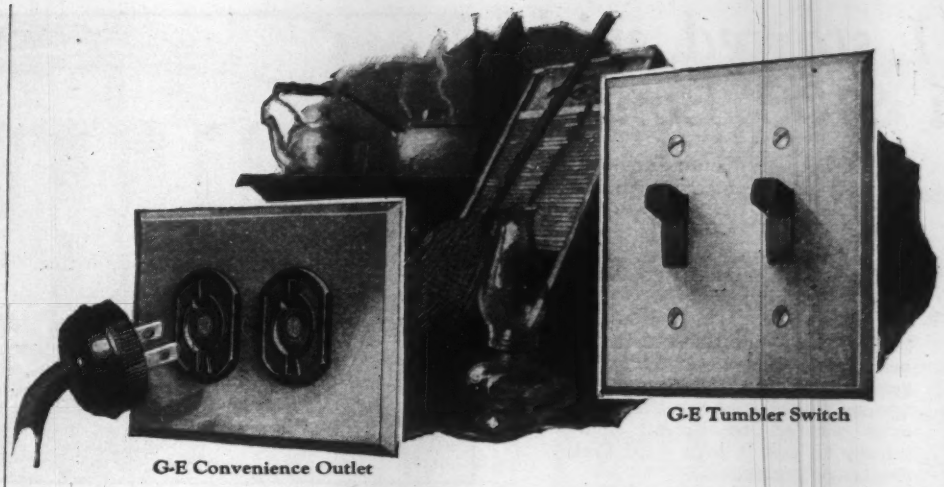

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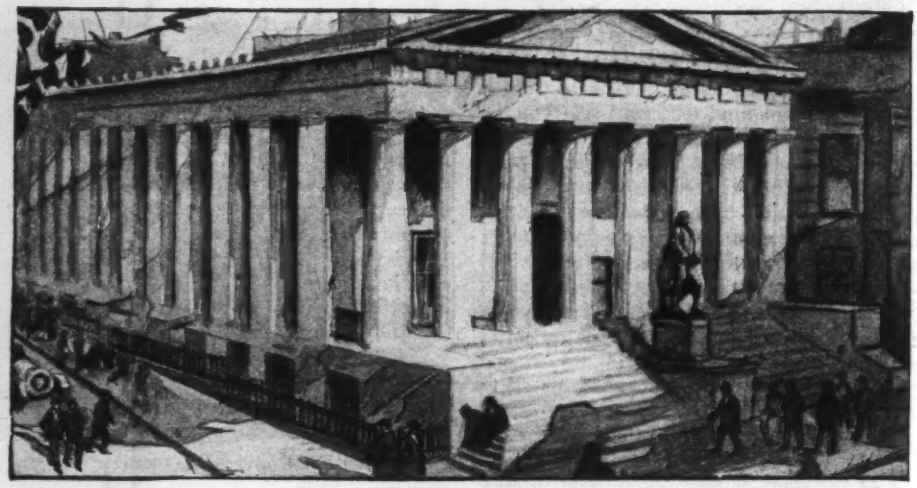

Financial Problems

By Franklin K. Sprague

THIS department of financial advice freely offers its services to all readers. Send your query to the Financial Editor of McCLURE'S MAGAZINE, 80 Lafayette Street, New York City, and you will receive a prompt reply. Correspondence will be held confidential, but investment questions of general interest will be published anonymously.

Q. I have about $1,500 to invest and, being a woman and dependent on the income of my investments, I wish my capital to be safe and interest sure and at the same time to get, if possible, at least 6 per cent. I have already invested $1,000 in Liberty bonds, $3,300 in real estate bonds purchased through Straus & Company and the National City Company. $500 Kingdom of Denmark 6s, 1942; $1,000 New York Telephone 6s, 1949; $1,000 Dominion of Canada 5s, 1931; $400 Great Northern General Mortgage 5½s, 1931; $1,000 Kingdom of Sweden 6s, 1939.

I would like your advice about investing the $1,500. Would it be well to sell any of my present holdings and buy others in their place. I prefer to invest in bonds. I hold $500 in Trinity Building Corporation of New York, 5½s, put out by the National City Company. These are now selling at par. The company advises me to sell and buy in their place first closed mortgage 6½ bonds of Willys-Overland Company selling at 98. Would you consider it wise?

The Trinity bonds are due in 1937, the others in 1933. Is there danger in investing too much money in real estate bonds, even if purchased through reliable houses? Are the Western and Southern bonds advertised by such firms as G. L. Miller & Company and Adair Realty & Trust Company yielding 7 per cent as safe as those with smaller yield in other places?

A. Do not disturb any of your investments. They are sound and entirely appropriate for a woman in your position. The additional $10 a year you would obtain by exchanging Trinity Buildings 5½s for Willys-Overland 6½s would necessitate a sacrifice of security. Looking at the two buildings as income producers, disregarding for the moment their original cost and possible sale value, the superiority of the Trinity Building lien lies in the diversification of the building's sources of revenue. The Trinity Building houses companies and individuals representing numerous kinds of business. In the case of the Willys-Overland building the income supporting the loan is derived from one company, engaged in one form of business. We do not approve of the proposed exchange.

There is no more danger in investing in real estate mortgage bonds than in any other form of investing, provided the same degree of caution is exercised in each case. The firm of G. L. Miller & Company has a good reputation for negotiating real estate mortgages in the South. There is ample support for the claim that Southern real estate mortgages can yield a higher rate of income than mortgages of the same grade secured by property located in the Northwest. For the investment of your $1,500 new capital we suggest $1,000 Northern States Power 6s, due 1941, yielding approximately 6 per cent, and $500 Anaconda Copper 6s, due 1953, yielding about 6.3 net.

Q. I should appreciate it if you could and would at this time give me a list of a few of the best buys in common stocks, both for investment and speculation, that you can recommend.

A. The selection of common stocks with an eye to their speculative attractiveness is a delicate problem at this time, in view of the high average level of stock prices and the existing widespread uncertainty about the trend of business during the coming twelve months. The situation justifies the general statement that if high-grade, dividend-paying common stocks are bought at the present time primarily for their value as permanent investments, but incidentally in expectation of appreciation in market value you are likely to be disappointed in the behavior of the stock during the next five years.

Putting it in another way, the chances of a decline on a given stock over a period of five years or even a shorter period are greater than the opportunities for profit. Stocks may advance materially before they turn definitely downward, but the inevitable reaction will come. This prediction conforms to stock-market history which repeats itself in every business cycle.

To illustrate the wide range of common stocks over a period of years, let us look into five representative high-grade issues that have long dividend records and are not likely to have their dividends reduced, even if we run into a period of depression

as severe as the 1920-21 period. Turn to the financial section of a daily newspaper and compare the current prices with the low level of the last 3½ years. General Electric sold at 109½ in 1921, American Car & Foundry at 111 in 1920, American Telephone & Telegraph at 92⅛ in 1920, Westinghouse Electric at 38⅞ in 1921 and Brooklyn Edison at 82 in 1920. There are many more stocks of similar grade that we could use to illustrate what happens in the market for first-class stocks in a relatively short time.

Without leaning at all toward the pessimistic stand that is now being taken by expert traders, we can say with every expectation of having the market itself substantiate this statement, that the attainment of the low prices just quoted is within the bounds of possibility. If you can buy high-grade stocks that are likely to continue paying the current dividend rate through another session of poor business and can do so with a firm purpose to resist the temptation to sell at a loss later on, all well and good. But if you are the kind of investor who cannot stand having the market go against him do not buy now.

On the other hand, if it is your purpose to go in for stocks now in expectation of selling at a profit after a lapse of a few weeks or months we can be of little assistance to you. For obvious reasons, this department cannot attempt to tell its readers how to take advantage of short trading opportunities in the stock market. For investment purposes the five stocks mentioned above are among the best junior issues that you can find. The question of choosing an advantageous time to buy is one that the investor must answer for himself.

Q. Please give me your opinion of Cuba Cane Sugar common stock as an investment when it is around ten to eleven dollars per share and let me know if the stock is salable at any time at the price it is listed.

A. Cuba Cane Sugar common stock has speculative possibilities, but its claim to investment is rather remote. Even the preferred stock is a speculative security. This company has made a remarkable recovery from the condition which very nearly brought it into financial difficulties two years ago. Out of earnings in 1923, the management has retired practically all the heavy bank loans that were being carried.

If present satisfactory operating conditions in the sugar industry continue for another year there is a strong likelihood of the preferred stock being put on a dividend-paying basis again, but do not overlook the fact that the company is in arrears for 20 per cent of accumulated dividends on the $50,000,000 preferred stock, and this must be cleared up before the common can come in line for a dividend.

Q. Kindly give me information in regard to cost of an annuity or income insurance, payable monthly to the insured during life; age 64 to, say, 66. Also names of the strongest companies writing such policies.

A. There is no uniform rate applying to annuities sold by the various life insurance companies, and for this reason we must be content with mentioning the names of two companies and suggesting that you apply to them for their terms. Two of the larger companies are the Equitable Life Assurance Society and the Travelers Insurance Company.

Q. Do you know anything about Olney Woolen Mills? I have a small holding of this and while it paid 8 per cent for a time it has not paid anything recently.

A. In view of the fact that there is no available information on the Olney Woolen Mills, we suggest that you get in touch with the secretary of the company and ask that you be furnished with the latest balance sheet and income statement. There is no trace of a market for the stock of this company, even in those quarters where inactive securities are quoted. The last record of an inquiry dates back a year or more when the firm of Charles A. Day & Company, 44 Broad Street, New York, was listed as being interested as a dealer. We know nothing about this firm outside of its interest in this stock.

Q. I hold a miscellaneous lot of securities that have been recommended by editors of financial departments in various periodicals. My total holdings are now $30,000. I am contemplating engaging the service of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York for their custody or safe-keeping. This service will cost me about $1.00 per month per $1,000 per annum. What I would like to know is whether there is a hazard in such an arrangement. What should I guard against in entering into such an arrangement? I understand that I receive a receipt for each and all securities, but can I place absolute confidence in this concern?

A. We approve of your plan to entrust your securities with the Guaranty Trust Company. There are no hazards in this plan, as far as we can see, but it would be a good idea to have an understanding as to just what securities you want the company to buy with the income from your investments. This understanding should be in writing, your letter of instruction being confirmed by the trustee.

Q. Kindly give me some information concerning the present value and the future outlook for both preferred and common stock of the Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation. Is it of the mushroom variety? What is the value of the preferred of Stevens Duryea, Inc.?

A. Di Giorgio Fruit Corporation units of one share of preferred and three of common are quoted at 45 bid, offered at 48. We do not advise a conservative investor to pin too much hope of permanent income on these stocks. The company is not a "mushroom" affair, but its stock holds a speculative rating, as do the stocks of many honest corporations.

The assets of the Stevens Duryea Incorporated, were sold for $450,000 last October. About the time of that sale the preferred stock was quoted at $1 bid, offered at $2.50, but there is no quotation for the common. Units of one share of preferred and one of common were quoted in November at $1 bid, offered at $3. The value of the stock is gradually diminishing and will undoubtedly disappear entirely in time. We advise you to sell for what you can get. The Union Bond & Mortgage Company of Philadelphia, we believe, is interested as a broker and may be able to find a market for you. We know nothing of the Union Company outside of its reported interest in the market for this stock.

Q. I have 15 shares Atlantic Gulf and West Indies preferred that I bought at 18. Would you advise me to hold this stock and also tell me why the preferred stock is lower than the common.

A. No one has ever been able to give a satisfactory answer to your second question—the reason why Atlantic Gulf and West Indies common stock sells at a higher price than the preferred. This disparity was noticeable while the stocks were declining from their peak and will probably continue as long as the payment of a dividend on the

[Continued on page 124]

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Financial Problems

[Continued from page 123]

preferred is remote. The shipping business appears to have passed through the worst and better things may be expected if the stockholder is willing to sit patiently and wait. We judge by the price you paid for Atlantic Gulf that your motive in buying was speculation. That being the case, we cannot attempt to say whether or when to sell.

Q. I have 20 shares of Star Motor stock. I bought this at $15.00 per share. Kindly tell me whether or not I should keep these stocks.

A. When you bought Star Motor stock you went in for a speculation. Your disposition of this stock at this time will depend on whether you consider the speculation worth continuing or whether you now believe that your financial circumstances call for a seasoned investment security. No one can decide this question for you.

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3. "How to Select Safe Bonds" is a booklet that has recently been published by George M. Forman & Company, 105 West Monroe Street, Chicago, Ill. Send for this booklet.
4. "Current Offerings"—a booklet describing First Mortgage Investments in Washington, D. C., yielding 6½% to 7.13%, that have back of them a record of no loss to any investor in 50 years. For copies, address The F. H. Smith Company, 815 Fifteenth Street, Washington, D. C.
5. "A Short Cut to Financial Independence" is a booklet which explains how to invest money systematically in Profit Sharing Bonds and the result of doing so. This booklet is distributed gratis by Clarence Hodson & Co., 135 Broadway, N.Y.
6. "The Columbia Type of Bond" is a unique investment booklet, published by the Columbia Mortgage Company. In addition to listing the Company's offerings, this contains a variety of information on such interesting subjects as: the history of the first mortgage from Babylonian days up to the present time, a comparison between tax-exempt and taxable securities, and the mag c growth of money through compound interest. This booklet will be distributed free upon application to the Columbia Mortgage Co., 4 East 43rd St., New York City.

Down to the Sea for Fatbacks

[Continued from page 13]

thing which we call "fisherman's luck."

The fishing boat now draws up alongside the small boats and the remaining fish, now concentrated into a net bowl or bag some twenty-five feet in diameter, are bailed out and lifted aboard the steamer. Several thousand fish are raised at each dip of the power bailer and dumped into the hold.

Here in the hold we can get a better look at our catch. One might suppose that in impounding a section of sea 330 feet in diameter and sixty feet deep a great variety of sea life would be brought up. But such does not prove to be the case. Along with a catch of seventy thousand menhaden we find only three food fish—one porgy and two bluefish—not enough to supply the crew's table. Several small sharks or dogfish, a few crabs and now and then a jellyfish complete the census of sea life caught. And this is about the average, we learn.

TO the fisherman who has sat for hours on the bank of a river and declared himself well satisfied if an afternoon's fishing yielded half a dozen small catfish, the sight of all these thousands of fish in the ship's hold is something of a revelation. A space sixty to seventy-five feet long, twenty feet wide and eight or ten feet deep is completely filled with fish. Every fish looks exactly like its neighbor in shape, color and size. The newly caught top layer flutters and shimmers in the sunlight. Only an occasional dogfish or crab, partly hidden in the living mass, breaks the uniformity of the picture. When the fishing is particularly good and the hold entirely filled, the last catches are dumped on the decks and the boat on its homeward journey seems to be bearing a cargo of silver touched with a greenish-blue iridescence.

No matter at what hour the returning boats arrive, the factories must be ready to receive the cargo. Usually this is late at night. Mechanical conveyors empty the holds and carry the fish first through an automatic measuring device which "counts" them, then into the steam cooker. This is a long cylindrical apparatus heated by steam and so arranged that the fish will move through in a continuous stream.

This steamed mass, now no longer recognizable as fish, goes into a hydraulic press where it is squeezed until nearly all the oil is extracted. The oil flows into a series of tanks where it settles and clears and is finally barreled and sold for a variety of uses. It may go into paints or soaps, replacing linseed or cottonseed oil, or it may be treated with hydrogen and made into lard substitute, now so largely used for cooking purposes.

The bones and meat left after the oil is extracted must be dried in a huge oven and in this form it is ready for use as fertilizer. This is the well-known fish "scrap." Where the new stock food is the final product desired, a grinding process is used. This pulverizes all the bones and makes the whole into a golden meal-like material. Strangely enough, most of the fish odor has been lost.

By the time the boats have again reached the fishing grounds the factory may have the catch of the previous day largely converted

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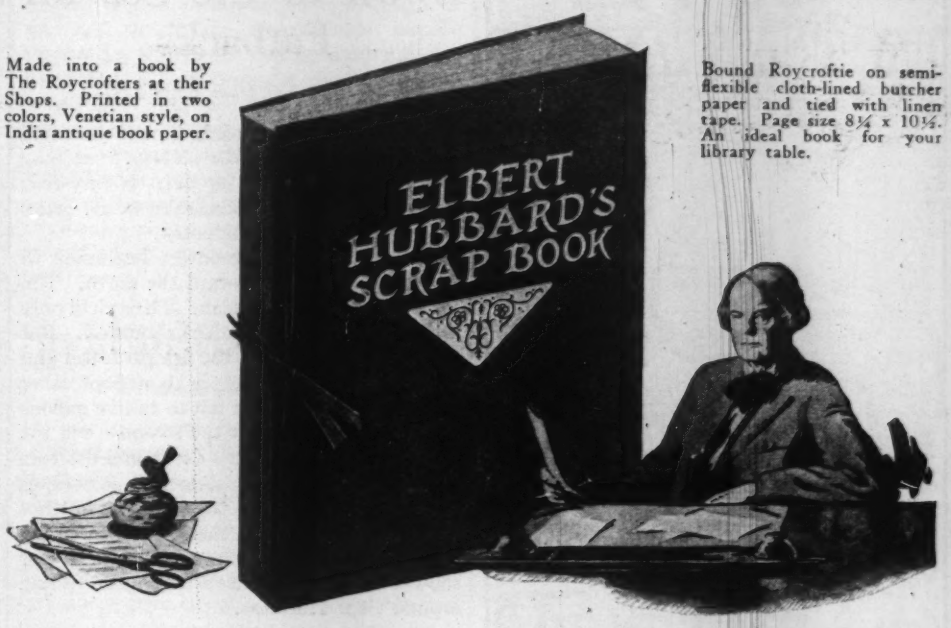

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Down to the Sea for Fatbacks

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into oil, fertilizer and feed. But if the catch is exceptionally large the factory force may have to work twenty or even twenty-four hours at a stretch. Union rules would break the menhaden fishing industry.

For three or four months, beginning in April, the fish move toward the north. The early fish are thin and lean. They yield only a gallon or two of oil to the thousand. But as the season advances the fish get fatter and when the "down run" sets in about September the yield of oil may be ten to twelve gallons per thousand. Late in the season when the Hatteras storms threaten death and destruction, the oil runs up to sixteen or sometimes eighteen gallons. It is then the rich catches are made. A factory that has been losing money all season may recover its losses and show a nice profit of two weeks' good fishing around Cape Hatteras.

BUT old Boreas is jealous of this success; it takes a good boat and a brave captain to pluck this ocean gold from his grasp successfully. But a million fish in a day, at five dollars per thousand! Figure it out for yourself. The temptation is great and the boats sometimes venture forth. Here of late one enterprising company has built boats twice the usual size, designed especially to weather the Hatteras storms.

Reedville has but one street, but on that street are as beautiful residences as one would care to see, and nearly all of them have been built with money made from the menhaden fishery. One handsome structure set in spacious grounds cost sixty thousand dollars in the days before the war. A dozen or more other residences on this street would grace Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, or Michigan Boulevard, Chicago.

But one must not get the idea that all is adventure and romance and wealth in the menhaden industry. There is adventure aplenty, it is true—both personal and business. How to take the gamble out of the industry is the big problem. Sometimes three years go by before a factory accumulates anything but debts. The inadequately financed go broke. During the late war when the Government placed the great net across the mouth of Chesapeake Bay to keep out marauding submarines, the menhaden seemed to acquire the habit of passing up the coast without turning into the bay. So for several years fishing inside the capes was extremely poor.

The present hope for stabilization in the industry is in bigger boats capable of following the fish wherever they go, a system of spotting the big schools by the use of hydroplanes, and intercommunication between boats by means of wireless. It is believed that this equipment will enable the boats to locate the fish more readily and substitute a little fisherman's science for the time-honored fisherman's luck.

From the standpoint of national economy this development of our sea resources is highly important. One hundred thousand tons of fish solids turned into ham and eggs means an added food supply not to be sneezed at. Seventy-five million pounds of fish oil fill a big hole in our national oil and fat requirements. Both may be largely ex-

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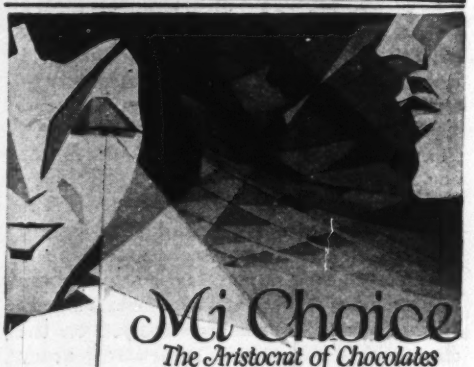

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Spoiling the Egyptians

[Continued from page 10]

He set one booted foot on the lower step, slouched comfortably on his elbow, and explained: "Ye see, I sold out my farm last month, back yander in Kansas, an' me an' the old woman figured we might maybe make a stake runnin' a livery stable and eating house in this Cripple Creek they's so much talk about here lately. The old woman is a right good single-handed cook, and me—well, I calc'late I know's much as most about hosses."

The man beside the captain leaned forward in his chair, chuckling.

"Here's a sport!" he said. "The chap's a card—Native Son of the Soil, 'good as anybody and better than most,' as their saying goes. Lay you anything you like he'll bite at any game we offer. So you know horses, do you?" he called to the man at the steps. "And what's that animal behind your wagon, then?"

The captain sat tight. He was a simple soul, but his eyeteeth were well developed. He noticed the man's boot—as much of it as showed beneath the faded denim of the overall—a well-made boot with an uncommonly high heel. As for the Egyptians, their eyes were holden and their hearts were hardened, even as in the days of Moses.

The man at the steps lifted his elbow and half turned, looking back at the wagon. Then he faced his grinning audience again.

"That animal," he drawled, with an accent of conviction, "is a hoss, a little gray mare hoss. And she's all hoss, too. She's got four feet and she can move 'em right nimble."

He let it go at that and waited for them to swallow the bait. They did so—hook, line and sinker—crowding one another in their eagerness. Guffaws arose along the porch, and what the Parliamentary reports call "ironical cheers." One voice made itself heard.

" 'Nimble!' he says. Oh, rippin'! Simply rippin'! I say, you chaps, everybody's in on this!" More members appeared, deserting the billiard tables and the card room.

The man who had sat beside the captain pushed his way to the front and held up his hand for attention.

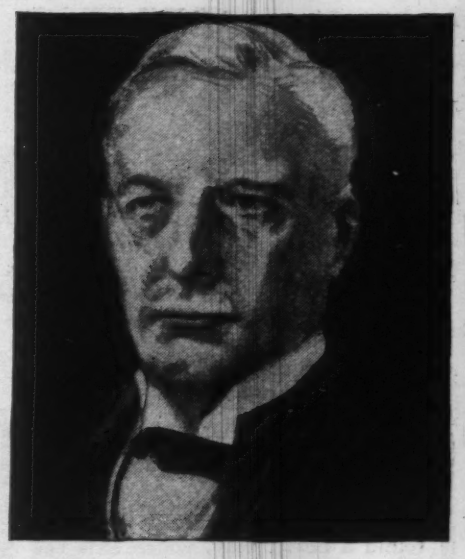
"Don't crowd!" he cried. "Room for the booky!"

He pointed across the green, where a beautiful little bay pony danced in the sunshine, wrestling with a worried groom.

"Robin yonder is our idea of a light-footed horse," he said. "Do you fancy your mare could run against him?"

The farmer from Kansas looked indifferently at Robin. All this hullabaloo seemed to have made him sulky.

[Continued on page 128]



What I Learned About Old Age

By BYRAM C. KELLY, A.M., L.L.D.

I AM past 40 myself. I had begun to wonder when I would begin to break—to lose my old-time pep and aggressiveness—when, through a mutual friend I made the personal acquaintance of a certain member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, whose wonderful work I had heard of. I made a trip to his laboratories and the things I learned should interest every man approaching or past the prime of life. Surprising as it may seem, nearly two-thirds of all men past a certain middle age suffer with a disorder of the prostate gland.

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Spoiling the Egyptians

[Continued from page 127]

"Well," he drawled, "if that's the best ye've got, I reckon the mare's not reskin' much."

More guffaws and cheers. Their hearts were hardened. They pressed about him, money in hand, already tasting the joys of putting this cocksure yokel in his place.

At sight of the money the farmer gave ground a little.

"Hold on there!" he said. "You gents is goin' pretty strong fer me. I ain't got much in my clothes—the old woman is settin' on the farm money. How is this here race goin' to be organized? Is that your race track?"

He seemed to notice for the first time the smoothly rolled half-mile track beyond the paddock.

"How fur is it round that track?" he asked, beginning to hedge. "The mare's distance is half a mile, ye know."

The captain was watching him keenly, his light blue eyes narrowed. He had not left his chair nor said a word, but now his straight mouth began to twitch under his trooper's mustache.

There was an uproar of gibes and taunts, offers of heavy odds, derisive laughter. The Kansas farmer recovered his nerve.

"Wait a minnit!" he protested. "Let me get this straight. You gents offers five to one the mare against the field, half mile only, and one heat to decide?" They all shouted agreement. "Who's to hold the stakes?" he demanded.

There was a moment's hesitation. The captain came forward.

"If I might suggest," he said mildly, "being a visitor—disinterested—all that sort of thing?"

In the midst of noisy approval from the members of the club, the farmer and the captain looked hard at one another — keen gray eyes into keen blue ones. The farmer nodded.

"Suits me," he agreed. "Dawgone if I don't try to talk the old woman out of five hundred, and give ye a run fer your money."

He slouched back to his wagon and was forthwith swept into a torrent of words and gestures from the woman in the sunbonnet. She seemed to be long on language and short on sporting spirit. If she was, as he had stated, setting on the farm money, she must have expected it to hatch: at least she showed the same reluctance to move as a setting hen. The crowd on the porch looked on and roared encouragement. Three or four of them hurried out to the paddock to get the racing ponies under saddle.

At last the woman threw up her hands in disgust and extracted from some mysterious safe deposit a wad of currency, which the farmer thrust down into his jeans, and turned to speak to the boy, who still sat on the bed roll, quite unmoved by all the excitement. A few words, however, seemed to rouse him, and he promptly dropped to the ground and busied himself with the gray mare, going over feet and legs with careful hands. The farmer ambled back to the porch and the book was duly made up, the captain taking possession of the stakes with a solemn countenance.

Four smart little ponies danced and fretted in the paddock, and their riders fretted with them—impatient for the killing that was certain to follow. It was almost a shame to do it—the little gray mare had looked so

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dejected. Under the ministrations of the boy, however, she waked up, her ears pricked and quivered, and she began to shift her feet. The boy reached into the wagon box, fumbled in the hay and dragged out a light racing saddle and bridle, well worn, but thoroughly sound. Fitting these to the mare, he swung lightly up and trotted round to the paddock.

Here he seemed to become aware for the first time of the contrast between his ragged overalls and the smart rig of the polo riders. He glanced down at himself with a disgruntled eye, and then with a few swift motions he stripped off the overalls and sat there in his saddle in the bright silk shirt, whipcord breeches and trim boots of a most proper jockey. He even pulled a peaked cap from his shirt front and stuck it on his red hair. It made him look older, somehow—and much more crafty.

The polo riders stared, and one or two swore softly. In their classic phrase, they looked down their noses a bit. But the crowd was all lined up now and calling for haste. Besides, what did it matter if the poor fool chose to burlesque a jockey? That wouldn't make his mount move any faster.

The captain's face was solemn, but his eyes danced. The jockey grinned widely, so that his ears were in danger, and guided his mount to the barrier. The farmer pushed his way to the rail, and the sunbonneted woman stood up in the wagon, watching with all her eyes. The judges announced the conditions of the race, the starter lifted his flag and the eager little horses surged into line. Everything regular and according to Hoyle. Their hearts were hardened.

The flag dropped at the second try and away they went—four in the field and the little gray mare. As they started, the farmer suddenly lost his slouch, threw his forlorn hat into the air, and sounded the wild war cry of the range rider, "E—e—e—yah! Yip! Yip! Ri-ide 'im, cowboy!" And from the sunbonnet in the wagon there burst a high ringing yell that made the captain look over his shoulder, and laugh at last.

"God bless the Irish!" he cried, and turned back to the race.

Really, there was nothing to it. The polo ponies ran furiously, bunched together, straining eagerly for the goal, their riders yelling encouragement. As for the little gray mare—she simply laid her ears back, stretched her neck and passed away from there. As Jimmy Mulligan said later, in the Split X bunk house, she was so far ahead at the finish that she looked plumb lonesome.

As she flashed past the judges' stand, a blank silence settled upon the dazed Egyptians. But it didn't last. A wild Irishman suddenly materialized among them, whirling in a mad Irish jig and spouting insults for the hated Sassenach. Where he came from was a mystery until they noticed the wreck of a sunbonnet still tied about his neck. The farmer failed to show any surprise at this transmogrification of his old woman; he was too busy sounding his war cry, hugging the little gray mare, and beating the grinning jockey on his silken shoulders.

Then among the Egyptians there arose a murmuring, growing into angry protests and some ugly talk. They surged about the judges and the captain, their careful English calm all shot to pieces with their broken pride.

"We've been had, I tell you! We've been

[Continued on page 130]

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